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CHRISTIANITY A WAY OF LIFE AND BELIEF

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CHRISTIANITY

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A STUDENTS' TEXT-BOOK

By Professor JOHN W. BAILEY, Ph. D.

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To

The Memory

of

My Father

and

My Mother

FOREWORD

THERE are many angles of approach to the subject discussed in this little book. The scope and character of this discussion have been determined by the purposes which the editors of the series desire it to serve and by the rigidly limited space assigned for the treatment. The author is keenly aware of the omission altogether, by necessity, of important matters, and the inadequacy at many points in the treatment of the subjects discussed. Under the circumstances it was thought to be better to give attention to the distinctive elements in the message of Christianity than to attempt to enter a wider field. The writer believes very firmly that the great distinctive of Christianity is Jesus himself. It is his sincere hope that this brief discussion may be of real help to those for whom it was written, in leading to a better understanding and a truer appreciation of the truth which is in Christ Jesus.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	The Central Fact of Christianity	1
II.	The Essentials of Early Christian Experience	12
III.	The Fundamentals of Early Christian Belief	24
IV.	The Gospel of the Cross	35
V.	Jesus the Teacher	47
VI.	The Central Emphases of Jesus' Teaching	59
VII.	The Principles of Christian Living	71
VIII.	The Practise of Christian Living—the Family	87
IX.	The Practise of Christian Living—The Problem of Wealth	99
X.	The Practise of Christian Living—World Brotherhood	111
	Bibliography	127

I

THE CENTRAL FACT OF CHRISTIANITY

The Appeal to Facts

Christianity is an historical religion. By this is meant that it has its origin in a definite group of historical facts, with a definite historical setting. It cannot be correctly understood and appreciated except in the light of these facts. But it is the strength of Christianity, not its weakness, that it is based upon definite facts. There are those who have attempted to show that the New Testament writings do not give us any such basis of fact, and still others who hold that while there is a basis of fact, yet it has been so hidden and covered over by misunderstanding and misinterpretations that we can no longer know just what the original facts were. The knowledge that such views are held and taught has led some sincere Christian people to feel afraid of all such study, as if somehow the basis of our Christianity might be found to be less secure than we had believed; or perchance it might be irreverent to give any attention to such questions. But we need have no fear of a frank, honest study of the subject, and we have the injunction of the apostle Paul to "prove all things, hold fast that which is good." In trying to understand Christianity we may very well begin by realizing that its facts are older than the New Testament itself.

Sources of Evidence

The New Testament, of course, must always remain our first and great source of information concerning every-

thing having to do with the origin and earliest days of Christianity. But in a matter so important as this we should welcome all the evidence we can secure. Students of the New Testament have long known of certain references in Roman writers of the early second century—Pliny, Tacitus, and Suetonius, and in the writings of Josephus, the learned Jewish historian near the close of the first century, that are very interesting. They supply us little information of value that we do not find in the New Testament, but they give us a few helpful side-lights that enable us to see how Christianity impressed those who were not its disciples but its critics. There is also known to us today, some of it for a long time and some of it of recent discovery, a great body of literature written by Christians of the second century, and some of it almost certainly written before the close of the New Testament period. Many pages might be filled, if space permitted, with quotations from it that would be most informing. It must suffice to say that this great body of writings makes clear beyond any kind of question that these early Christians had just the same understanding of the historical beginnings of Christianity as that we find set forth in the New Testament itself. It is further true that these writings contain many references to the heresies of their time, but there is not at any point even a suggestion that the false teachers had any different understanding of the original facts of Christianity from that held by the orthodox Christians. They differ in their interpretation of the facts but not as to the facts themselves. It is only a simple statement of the truth to say that all the evidence we have, both Christian and non-Christian, from the very earliest days after the apostles, agrees in placing the origin

of Christianity in the realm of certain definite historical facts; and they assume that these facts are known and accepted by every one else. It is furthermore true that all this evidence supports that of the New Testament itself.

The New Testament

The New Testament is not Christianity but Christianity's book. It is not the source out of which Christianity comes, but Christianity is the source out of which it comes. There were Christians for a score of years before any of the books of our New Testament were written. They wrote because they were Christians and had a story to tell. In the preface of his Gospel (1:4), Luke informs us that he wrote in order that Theophilus might know the certainty of the things wherein he had already been instructed. Paul wrote most of his letters to churches to which he had already preached the gospel, and he had been an apostle for fifteen years, at the least calculation, before he wrote any of them. Behind all the writings lay nearly a score of years of experience which came to expression in the writings. Nearly all of these books of the New Testament were written between A. D. 50 and 100, and it is frequently urged that inasmuch as they come from a period so long after the events which they describe, we must allow for the possibility that a large amount of legendary material crept in, and we can no longer know just what the original facts were. To that point we must attend.

The Gospels

It is a matter of real importance to note that the Gospels were written by those who did not think it necessary to

lay emphasis upon their authorship as if the naming of some apostle or some other great leader in the church as the source of their information or origin would give them added value. They assume that there is no difference of opinion about the general facts with which they deal, but that they are accepted without question everywhere among the Christian churches. Luke tells us in the opening verses of his Gospel that many had already written Gospels prior to his writing, basing them on the evidence furnished by eye-witnesses to the events of the life of Jesus. He also says that he had made a very careful study of all the facts and traced them back to the beginning, and that his Gospel was based upon the results of this investigation. This means that the material in our Gospels goes back to a generation of witnesses behind the writings. Among these witnesses are some who knew the facts at first hand, and if the Gospels had not told the truth it would have been a comparatively easy matter to have discredited them. But they stood the test. The reason is clear. They simply put into written form the evidence that was handed along by those who had first-hand knowledge of the facts. This is just what Luke reports to be the case. It may be observed that all the other books of the New Testament that come from the same period as the Gospels, and that means most of them except the writings of Paul, imply the same group of facts as the Gospels themselves contain. These books come from various writers, conditions, and places, but they are in quite thorough accord with the Gospel story. There is not a particle of evidence that any Christians of this period had any other understanding of the matter. The Gospels are truly representative of the mind and belief of the churches everywhere.

Paul

Paul is of special importance as a witness to the faith and understanding of the early disciples. His letters are the earliest group of writings in the New Testament, falling within the period A. D. 50 to 65. Careful study confirms the impression of a casual reading that those to whom he writes entertain the same ideas concerning the origin of Christianity that Paul himself holds. He everywhere takes it for granted that on these matters he and they are of one mind. It is further clear from a study of such passages as 1 Thessalonians 1:10; Galatians 1:16-23; 2:1, 2, that for years Paul had been preaching the same gospel as that he was preaching during the period of the writing of his letters. No student of the New Testament would place the conversion of Paul later than about A. D. 36, and some of our very best scholars are of the opinion that it was a few years earlier, possibly as early as the year A. D. 31. This brings us back to within five or six years, at the longest, and one or two years at the earliest, of the date of the death of Jesus, which must be placed in either the year 29 or the year 30. From Galatians 1:17 we learn that three years after the conversion of Paul he went up from Damascus to Jerusalem to visit Peter, at which time he doubtless learned many things about the life of Jesus. In 1 Corinthians 15:3-7 we are told by Paul that certain primary matters in the gospel which he preached were received by him from those who were before him. Peter was doubtless one of those whom Paul had in mind. Thus Paul, by his own testimony, carries us back to the very first years of the Christian movement, and affirms that the gospel which we find in his

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letters and the preaching of his later years is precisely that gospel which he had preached from the beginning. This statement includes the facts as well as his interpretation of the facts. And it is his no less emphatic assertion that he held this gospel in common with those who were in the work before him. The early chapters of the book of Acts confirm this testimony of Paul in a striking way. They indicate very clearly that the historical facts presupposed in the preaching of these earliest evangelists were precisely those which underlie the preaching of Paul.

The Variety of the New Testament

This fact upon which we are insisting becomes all the more impressive when we consider the great variety of the New Testament writings. They originally existed as separate independent books and were composed by various men through a period of at least half a century. They were composed under greatly differing circumstances and conditions. Each one was written for a particular situation and was intended to meet a very definite need. Each book has its own character, its own setting, and its own distinctive purpose. Nor is the variety confined merely to external features. It extends to inner characteristics and point of view as well. The men who wrote came out of radically different cultural and religious backgrounds. The mold of their thought is very diverse. And the fact that they were writing under the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit did not take away any of their individuality. They were just as different in their personal characteristics and point of view as we are today. The distinct point of view and quality apparent in the books they wrote are due to the fact that God was using them

not as machines but as men. Life always expresses itself in variety and not in uniformity. This variety which we find in the New Testament is the evidence of the fulness and richness of the life and truth to which its writers are giving expression. It is not a discredit, but a credit to the New Testament that we should find this manysided message in it. God is using the individuality of each writer and each situation to set forth the full-rounded truth.

The Unity of the New Testament

For behind all this variety there is a striking unity. This unity is much more significant than the variety, and is one of the most impressive features of the New Testament message. There was something which all held in common and without which they would have had nothing to say and nothing to write. Indeed, without it there would have been no New Testament and no Christianity. The source of this unity is a Person and his life, and that Person is Jesus. It is to him that these early apostles and disciples constantly refer, and of him that they continually speak. Christianity at the base is not something that has been said about Jesus or written of him. It is not even anything that he himself did or said. These things all reveal him to us and help us to understand him. To be sure, without them we would not know anything about him at all. But it is he, his person, his spirit, his life, his very self that is the center and core of our Christian religion. The central fact of Christianity is Jesus. "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3:11). If he stands it will stand, if he falls nothing can hold it up. Indeed, if he falls there is very little left in historical Christianity that is worth hold-

ing up. Jesus Christ is himself New Testament Christianity. If we lose hold of him we have lost everything which made the New Testament new.

One Jesus

Luke, it will be remembered, tells us in his preface that many Gospels were written before his. It is one of the assured results of New Testament study that our present Gospels incorporate some of this older material. Some have thought that by analyzing our Gospels into their component parts and segregating these older portions from the comment of the writers of the Gospels in their present form, we might find a more primitive picture of Jesus. They have suggested that when we find this more primitive Jesus he will be found to be different from our usual conception of him. It is true that our present Gospels themselves give us perfectly clear evidence that there was a great divergence of opinion about Jesus among the people of his day. Once, near the end of his ministry in Galilee, Jesus asked his disciples what men were saying about him. (Matt. 16:13, 14; Mark 8:27, 28; Luke 9:18, 19.) Their answer indicates that there was no agreement among the people concerning him, except that he was a very unusual personality. The least they say of him is that he is a prophet, and most of the things said imply that they regarded him as much more than a prophet. This impression made by Jesus upon those who were not his disciples is quite in line with all the evidence that the Gospels supply us, and we cannot find anywhere any indication of a Jesus behind the Gospels whose character and life were different from that which we have set forth in the constant statements of our Gospels as we have them

today. They give us the primitive Jesus, and tell us the story of his life as he lived it.

The Picture Natural

One of the most striking and significant things about the picture of Jesus is that it is drawn so naturally and is so true to life. There is an utter absence of anything like a straining after effect. It is simple, straightforward, and gives the impression of an unstudied statement of fact. The earliest tradition we have tells us that Mark wrote his Gospel as he remembered what he had heard of Peter's preaching. He composed it without trying to place events in exact order, but was careful to tell the story just as he heard it, not adding to or taking from it. He told the plain, uncolored truth as he had heard it in the sermons of Peter. This Gospel bears the marks of such a writing, and the spirit which we find in it is common to them all. They carry throughout the impression of their honesty and simplicity. The character that they set forth is perfectly consistent and bears the stamp of genuineness.

The Picture Unique

Some students have suggested that the picture is based upon facts but is touched up. Just as a photographer might take a negative and retouch it to remove the flaws and blemishes that may appear, or an artist paint a picture which is only an ideal study, not a reproduction of life, so the Gospel writers. They have drawn an ideal picture, based, indeed, upon real life, but a picture that very greatly idealizes the subject. The famous French writer, Rousseau, who certainly cannot be charged with having any prejudice in favor of the Gospel story, has well said that

it would take a Jesus to produce a Jesus. We have in certain apocryphal Gospels of the second century an illustration of the kind of result we get when the writers begin to draw on their imagination instead of historical facts. These writings are full of absurdities and the most unnatural and unworthy conduct on the part of Jesus. They are trying to exalt him and show how he was always different from others, and how from the first he exhibited his divine power. They only succeed in giving us a story that makes him ridiculous and impossible. In the effort to imagine the actions of a divine person they give us a moral monstrosity. Passing from these writings to our Gospels in the New Testament produces upon us the deep and indelible impression of passing from a world of weird fancy to a world of sober fact. All we know of the men of Jesus' time (indeed all we know of men of all time) makes it impossible for us to believe that anybody could ever have given us the picture of Jesus which we have in the Gospels except as they reproduced it from life. Nothing but such a life could have given us such a story. Quoting Dr. T. R. Glover, "If Jesus is not historical there is no such thing as history at all, and if history is impossible, so is all other knowledge."

The Life Explains All

If the Gospel picture is taken as true, it becomes the natural and sufficient basis and explanation of all that we find in the history of the early church. If we accept it as it is given us, it becomes the foundation upon which all else may easily be built. If we set it aside as a bit of overdrawn fancy, then the whole period becomes a puzzle. Even the life-story itself then becomes an unsolved

problem. There is no Jesus known to us except the one we know in the Gospels. This life carries the conviction of its reality to our hearts and minds. It is the center around which all else revolves. It is the answer to all our life's problems. If we take him as the Gospels offer him to us, we walk in the light, for we have the light of life upon us. If he is not the light, then we are in the darkness even until now. And, what is more, we do not know in what direction to turn to look for the light. But

> I say, the acknowledgment of God in Christ
> Accepted by the reason, solves for thee
> All problems in the earth and out of it,
> And has so far advanced thee to be wise.
>
> —*Browning.*

Questions and Problems for Further Discussion

1. How are we to explain the meagerness of reference to the life of Jesus by the non-Christian writers of the late first and early second centuries?

2. What is the significance of the references to the origin of Christianity in the earliest Christian literature outside of the New Testament?

3. How much of the facts of the life of Jesus could one assemble from the New Testament writings outside of the Gospels?

4. What light does the preface of the Gospel of Luke give upon the writing of Gospels in the early church?

5. What is the greatest evidence of the truthfulness of the Gospel accounts of Jesus?

6. What is the supreme argument for the truth of the Christian religion?

II

THE ESSENTIALS OF EARLY CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE

The Beginning

We have already seen in the previous chapter that Christianity is older than our New Testament. We have also observed that there is no Christianity reflected in the New Testament which does not go back to Jesus. He is the very center and inspiration of it all, and if there had been no Jesus there would have been no Christianity. We are now to consider the essential elements in the experience which came to its expression and exposition in the New Testament.

Personal Association

In almost every effort we make to explain the meaning of our life and experience "the truth is usually so simple as not to seem learned enough." This statement has its application to the question before us here. Many labored and learned explanations of the matter have been given, but it is as simple as life itself—and as difficult of explanation. It cannot be more truly or clearly stated than in the words of Dr. T. R. Glover—"The gospel began with friendship." The earliest disciples of Jesus were his personal companions, and the association grew into such close, intimate fellowship that they became his friends. "No longer do I call you servants, for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends;

for all things that I have heard from my Father I have made known unto you" (John 15:15). Just as we establish a personal friendship today, so the earliest disciples of Jesus came through personal association and fellowship to be his friends.

Disciples

The earliest days in the ministry of Jesus of which the Gospels give us any glimpse show him in the act of gathering disciples. Certain of those who had responded to the preaching of John the Baptist left him to become followers of Jesus. And at the very beginning of Jesus' ministry in Galilee we have the story of the call of four who later became the leaders in the group of the apostles. Many factors entered into the situation in which they decided to leave all and follow him. But the center of it was their response to his simple call, "Follow me." There was that in his personal presence that led them to go after him without hesitancy or question. "They left all and followed him" (Luke 5:11; Mark 1:20; Matt. 4:22). The stories of the calling of other disciples on subsequent occasions in his ministry do not duplicate this one in details, but they leave us the same impression. Those who followed him as disciples simply responded to the appeal of his presence and word.

Apostles

Mark (3:13, 14) tells us that when Jesus made choice of the twelve apostles, "He called unto him whom he would, and they went unto him. And he appointed twelve that they might be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach." It is clear from our records that of

these twelve at least one-third, and possibly one-half, had been associated with him from the beginning. This personal association was to be continued and intensified. In the thought of both Jesus and the apostles it was essential to their training and equipment for their ministry. After the resurrection of Jesus, when they were seeking one to take the place of Judas with the Twelve, Peter (Acts 1: 21, 22) states clearly that he must be one who had "companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John." Those who were to bear special responsibility in the work of extending the gospel had the special privilege of this very intimate personal fellowship with the Lord. It was this fellowship that was to qualify them for their ministry.

The Experience

It is evident from the Gospel story that the disciples did not follow Jesus because they had a clear and full understanding of him and his message. Over and over again they are mystified by something he says and does. On more than one occasion Peter asks him to explain (Matt. 13:36; 15:15, 16; 16:7-9; Mark 4:10, 34; 7:17, 18; 6:52; 8:14-18, 21; Luke 8:9) the meaning of some remark or teaching. When the major portion of his ministry was completed and his death only a few months ahead Jesus spoke to them for the first time (Matt. 16:21; Mark 8:31) about the necessity of going to Jerusalem to die. They had then had at least two years of personal contact with Jesus (perhaps three years), but they were wholly unprepared for the statement. "Peter took him, and began to rebuke him" (Matt. 16:22; Mark 8:32). Speaking not only for himself but also for all of the Twelve, he

utterly rejected the idea, and declared that it would never be. Even at this late day in their personal relations with him they saw in his announcement of his death only that which they believed impossible. When his death finally came they felt that it was the end of all their hopes for the redemption of Israel which had gathered about him. (Luke 24:21.) The request of James and John which we find in Matthew 20:20, 21 and Mark 10:35-37 shows an utter misconception of the kingdom which Jesus was to establish. It further appears from Acts 1:6 that this misunderstanding persisted among them even after the resurrection of Jesus. Some of them never got entirely away from it and one of the most critical situations in the entire story of the Apostolic age is related to this question. (Acts 15:1-39; Gal. 2:1-10.) The New Testament evidence is clear, and beyond question, that the early disciples of Jesus did not follow him because they understood him or his message.

Personal Friendship

Some time after the feeding of the five thousand, which is recorded in all four of the Gospels, there came a great crisis in the ministry of Jesus. The story of it in John is brief but illuminating. "Many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him" (John 6:66). Disappointed as they were over his refusal to become a king as they had tried to force him, and mystified by his teaching which followed (John 6:15, 41, 52, 60), the desertion was so complete that apparently only the Twelve were left. Jesus turned and asked if they were going too. Peter, as usual, acts as spokesman and replies: "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.

And we have believed and know that thou art the Holy One of God" (John 6:68, 69). We have here the explanation of that which kept Peter and his companions true when the others were deserting. They found in Jesus and his words that which satisfied their hearts. It was a personal fellowship which met their needs that held them steady, though they did not fully understand him or his words. In 2 Peter 1:3 we have a statement that seems to sum up the essential elements in all this early experience of the disciples. "He called us by his glory and virtue." It was his life, the spirit and splendor of it, the strength and power of it, that called them and held them to his service. When others, who had less intimate fellowship with him and less appreciation of him, deserted him, the apostles remained true, held by their experience of his own personal qualities and his gift to their own life. Jesus did not desire disciples who came to him because they were impressed by his wonderful works. John tells us (2:23-25) that Jesus did not trust himself to those who believed upon him because they saw the signs which he did. For he knew men and did not need to be told anything about them. Evidently he considered such discipleship undesirable because too superficial. At three different points in our Gospels (Matt. 12:38, 42; 16:1-4; Mark 8:11, 12; Luke 11:29-32) Jesus refuses to give a sign to the people, and declares that it is a wicked and rebellious generation that asks a sign. It is evident from an examination of all these passages that Jesus emphasizes the central importance of the truth of his teaching, and its sufficient basis of discipleship. These examples are illustrative of the entire spirit of the Gospel story. Jesus sought to establish a very simple personal relation with men.

Those who felt the appeal and made response became his disciples. Out of this personal fellowship came the group who were the first preachers of Christianity.

The Resurrection of Jesus

A new chapter in the experience of the disciples began with the resurrection of Jesus. It was the conviction that he was risen that brought them together in Jerusalem. When they sought the successor of Judas they wanted some one who could testify, with them, to the resurrection. (Acts 1:22.) This was one of the fundamental features of their preaching. (Acts 1:22; 3:15; 4:33; 1 Cor. 15:3, 4; Acts 17:18.) The evidence is beyond question that this was a basic conviction, and a cardinal point in all the message and ministry of the early church. Jesus who had been put to death at the hands of lawless and wicked men, had been raised from the dead and was alive again—the Prince of life. (Acts 3:15.) The evidence for the resurrection is not our point here, but he must shut his eyes tight who does not see that the fact of it was of crucial importance in the experience of these first disciples. In Acts 1: 1, 2 Luke tells us that his Gospel (cf. Acts 1:1 and Luke 1:3) was a narrative of the things that Jesus *began* to do and teach. He does not complete the sentence, but he clearly implies that the story of Acts is to be a record of that which Jesus *continued* to do and teach. The point of division in the complete story is the time when he was received up, and exalted to the right hand of God. (Acts 1:13; 3:21.) It is henceforth the risen and exalted Jesus with whom the story is connected. He had come forth conquering and to conquer, and a new day, bright with promise, had dawned.

The Spirit of Jesus

The coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost was the coming of the power by which all the work of those early preachers is understood to be carried forward. Repeatedly the necessity of this experience is emphasized. (Acts 1:4-8; 8:15; 9:17; 10:44-47; 11:17; 19:2.) It is understood that all the gifts of the Christian life are fruits of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:7-11; Gal. 5:22, 23; Rom. 8:9, 10, 14), and one who does not have the Spirit is not one of the company of true disciples.

But the coming of the Spirit is expressly connected by Peter with the exaltation of Jesus to the right hand of power. (Acts 2:33.) Jesus had "received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit," and had sent forth that which they had seen and heard. This statement assumes such teaching as we find in John 14:16, 26; 16:7, 13, 14; Luke 24:49; and Acts 1:4, 8, in which Jesus himself tells his disciples that he will send the Spirit, and that it will be his mission to take of the things of Jesus and make them plain unto his followers. Paul indeed declares (2 Cor. 5:16) that he no longer knows "Christ after the flesh," but he also says that "we have known Christ after the flesh." John is one of the most spiritual of all the writers of the New Testament, and perhaps more than any one sees the meaning of the Christian gospel in the light of eternity. But his first Epistle begins with the words, "That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld and our hands handled, concerning the word of life declare we unto you also." "If any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his" (Rom.

8:9). The first chapter of the book of Revelation contains a vision of the Son of man—Christ risen, but resident in and among the churches. For Paul the life which he lives he lives by faith in the Son of God. "So that it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2:20). The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus had made him "free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8:2). "If Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness" (Rom. 8:10). "God hath sent forth the spirit of his Son into our hearts" (Gal. 4:6). "I travail again until Christ be formed in you" (Gal. 4:19). Experience with Jesus, and experience of the spirit were essentially equivalent.

The Testimony of Experience

The spiritual experiences which we find everywhere in the New Testament are understood to be the manifestation of the spiritual presence of Jesus. Those who lived with him when he was among them in the flesh, saw in these experiences the continuation of that fellowship which they had enjoyed in the earlier time. If anybody can read the New Testament and not find in it the testimony to a great experience, he has read it to little purpose, and his judgment of what is to be found there is without value. The individuality of the various books of which we spoke in the previous chapter is due to the personal quality of the experience which lies behind each of them. It is this that makes the New Testament throb with life and with meaning for us. It is a book of life, and those who wrote it had experience of the life. If they had not, they would not have written, for they would have had nothing to write.

The Primacy of Experience

The preaching of the New Testament is the testimony of a great experience. This must not be understood to mean that the whole of the experience which is here set forth was realized before any of the teaching was formulated. That would not be true. As a matter of fact, faith and experience, belief and conduct belong together and each helps on the other. But experience is the more inclusive term, and faith is really grounded in experience. It was the experience of the early disciples with Jesus that led them to certain belief about him. If they had not had the experience they would not have had the belief. They saw and heard him, they felt his spirit, they came under his influence, and this led them to think of him in ways in which they thought of no one else. It was he and not their belief that made the difference. They explained him in a different way because they knew him to be different in his life with them. To hold that Christian experience followed Christian belief, as is sometimes done, is absolutely contrary to the plain word of the New Testament itself. "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" is the testimony of the early disciples. (Acts 4:20; cf. 1 John 1:1-3.) Back of their testimony and their teaching lay a great experience, and their beliefs and their doctrines flow forth out of this experience.

Christians

In a very real sense it is inaccurate to speak of Old Testament Christians. The name was first applied to the disciples of Jesus at Antioch in Syria some ten years

after the death of Jesus. (Acts 11:26.) The devout Jews of today have the same Bible, the same God, and the same religion as did the Jews in the time of Jesus. But these Jews would not permit any one to call them Christians. To them a Christian is one who confesses faith in Jesus as the Messiah of God. The personal attitude toward Jesus is the crucial matter. This was precisely the point that distinguished the Jews in Jesus' day. Those who became his disciples came to be known as Christians. Those who did not accept him simply remained Jews.

Life Abounding

"I am come that they might have life and that abundingly" was the statement of Jesus reported to us by John (10:10), and the purpose thus expressed had abundant fulfilment in the experience of Jesus' followers. They heard from him the words of eternal life (John 6:68), and from their fellowship with him they came into the enjoyment of a life which became a bubbling spring within their souls. (John 1:4; 4:14; 5:24; 8:12; 1 John 3:14.) The experience was so radical that they could only describe it in such terms as rebirth (John 3:5-8), a new creation (Gal. 5:6; 2 Cor. 5:17), a resurrection (Rom. 6:4, 5; Col. 3:1-3), and others of like import. All of these expressions indicate their estimate of the radical character of the great new experience which had its basis and its beginning in their fellowship with Jesus. He was himself the Prince of life (Acts 3:15), and the very life of God was in him. (John 5:26.) This life he had so perfectly embodied in his daily contact with them that he was indeed the life itself. (John 11:25; 14:6; 1 John 1:1, 2.) This same life he communicated to others as

he imparted himself to them in response to their faith and trust in him. (1 Cor. 15:45; Eph. 3:17.) He became so much the very spring and inspiration of their life that they lost themselves in him completely. (Gal. 2:20; Col. 3:4.) Indeed, they had come into the experience of the very life which God purposed and desired they should have—the life of God himself. (1 John 5:11, 12; Col. 3:3.) All that life could mean in fulness and richness it had come to mean to those who had entered into the fellowship of Jesus as friend and Lord. That which they found in him was deeper than they could fathom or trace out. (Eph. 3:8.)

The Overflow

Although this life was hidden at the sources with Christ in the being of God, yet it flowed out in an ever-increasing and varied stream of blessing. It brought them salvation (Acts 4:12; 13:26; 16:17; 28:28; Rom. 1:16; Eph. 1:13; 2 Tim. 2:10; Heb. 2:10; 5:9; 1 Peter 1:9; Jude 3) and a sense of sonship to God. (Rom. 8:14-16; Gal. 4:6.) It renewed them in the spirit of their mind (Rom. 7:25; 12:1, 2; Eph. 4:23), so that all things became new. (2 Cor. 5:17.) They had new peace (John 14:27; 16:33; Acts 10:36; Rom. 5:1; Gal. 5:22; Col. 3:15; 1 Peter 3:14), new freedom (Gal. 2:4; 5:1, 13; 2 Cor. 3:17; James 1:25; cf. 2 Peter 2:19), and a new goal of life and endeavor. (Rom. 6:12-14; Phil. 3:12-14; Col. 3:1-3; Eph. 4:13, 22-24.) It gave them a new dynamic which was sufficient for all things (1 Cor. 5:4; 2 Cor. 12:9; Phil. 4:13; Eph. 6:10; 1 Tim. 1:12; 2 Tim. 2:1; 2 Peter 1:16), and they could meet all the trials and tests of life and find a joy in the testing. (John 16:33; Rom. 5:3-5; 2 Cor. 7:

4; Col. 1:24; 2 Thess. 1:4; 1 Peter 4:12, 13; James 1:2-4; Heb. 2:18; 4:15; Rev. 1:9.) Nothing could dampen their ardor or take away their confidence. (2 Cor. 11:23-28.) Christ had done so much for them that they were persuaded that with him the future opened before them with limitless possibility. (1 John 3:1-3.) They had brought every thought into the captivity of obedience unto Christ (2 Cor. 10:5), and he had answered with such a flood of grace and blessing (John 1:16, 17; 1 Cor. 1:4) that they reveled in the overflow. They had Jesus, their friend, their Saviour, their Lord. The whole of the New Testament is their attempt to tell what that meant to them.

Questions and Problems for Further Discussion

1. What was the basic reason for the failure of the first disciples to understand Jesus?

2. State the fundamental cause or causes which led the first disciples to follow Jesus.

3. How did the death of Jesus affect the disciples?

4. What place did the resurrection of Jesus have in the experience of the early Christians?

5. What was the central distinction between the Christians and the non-believing Jews in the first days of Christianity?

6. What did Jesus bring to the first Christians which they did not find outside of him?

III

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF EARLY CHRISTIAN BELIEF

Experience and Interpretation

As indicated in the previous discussion, belief is based upon experience and is the attempt to interpret it. Every one who becomes such an interpreter must employ the language of his own time and people, and will use such terms and forms of speech as bear a common meaning for him and his hearers or readers. All language is symbolic. It is not itself the truth but is the form or mold in which the truth is expressed. The idea which the symbol contains is to be discovered by a careful consideration of the language in the light of the writer's own time and historical background. This principle is particularly important in the study of the New Testament writings. It is easy for us to read our own experience and ideas back into the New Testament and to assume that we understand its language because we have become familiar with it. But such a method is never defensible, and in the case of the New Testament it is particularly hurtful. Our concern should be to understand its language as nearly as possible just as it was in the mind of those who wrote it. Anything else is not worthy of us or of the book itself.

Jewish Background

In trying to understand the distinctive things in Christianity it is well for us to remember that the first disciples

were all Jews, and that the New Testament books were written either by Jews or by those who had come under the influence of the Jewish faith. The primary thought background of Christianity is to be found in the Jewish circle of ideas. Many of the things believed by the early disciples were carried over from their old faith into their new faith. This is not to say that they were not true, but only to say that they are not peculiar to Christianity. If they are not peculiar to it, then of course they do not constitute its distinctive beliefs. A brief review of the great and controlling ideas in the Jewish faith in the time of Jesus will help us to find our way to an understanding of the central features of Christianity.

God

The idea of God which is found in early Christianity is not new. It is the central, underlying thought of the Old Testament religion and teaching. The God of the earliest disciples was the God whom they had worshiped as Jews before they became Christians. They gained some new conceptions of God from Jesus, but they did not change from one God to another. The God of Jesus and the apostles was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. (Matt. 1:22; 15:31; 22:32; Mark 12:26, 29; Luke 1:6, 16, 66-68; John 1:16-18; Acts 3:13, 21-25; 5:30; 7:32; 13:17; 24:14; and many other passages.)

The Kingdom of God

The idea of the kingdom was not new. The Jews believed very firmly and very fervently in the kingdom of God. The kingdom was the kingdom of God and would be set up by his divine power. It had been especially promised to Israel and was for them and such of the Gentiles as

might identify themselves with the Jewish nation. They believed that it would be a national political kingdom in which Israel would be exalted over all her enemies, and the promises of God made to the fathers would be brought to fulfilment.

The disciples of Jesus came to have a new understanding of the kingdom and the way of entering into it, but it was still the kingdom in which they had believed before they became Jesus' followers. (Matt. 8:12; Luke 1:32; Acts 1:3, 6; 2:39; 10:36; 11:1-3, 18; 13:23, 32, 33; 15:5; 18:6; 22:21, 22; 28:17, 20 are illustrative passages.)

Law

The Jews also believed in a law which had been given them by God. The laws were given them to be obeyed, and they would finally be judged upon the basis of their fidelity in the keeping of them. They realized that they could not keep the law to perfection. The system of sacrifices which they sustained in the temple was a testimony and a reminder of this fact. The law was a blessing, for it showed them the way in which they should walk. The sacrifices at the temple were of various kinds, but one idea expressed in them was that of atonement for failure and sin. Sins could not be avoided altogether even with the most scrupulous keeping of the law. But if one made a sincere effort to obey, and in sincere spirit offered the sacrifices, God would forgive the sins and carry out his purpose and promise for his people. The way of deliverance was by obedience to the law. (Matt. 5:17; 12:5; 22:36; Luke 2:22-27, 39; John 1:46; 7:19, 49, 51; 12:34; 18:31; 19:7; Acts 6:13; 15:5; 18:13; 21:20.)

Judgment

In connection with the final establishment of God's kingdom there would be a judgment, at which time there would be a very sharp distinction between the righteous and the wicked. The wicked, the enemies of God and his people Israel, would be punished. Just what form this punishment would take is not always made clear, but it would be very terrible and destructive. The righteous ones of Israel would pass into a state of bliss in the kingdom.

Resurrection

The idea of the resurrection was also perfectly familiar to the Jews. They did not all believe in it, but they all knew about it. Whether the resurrection was to include both the righteous and the wicked was not always made clear. At times their writings seem to reflect the idea that only the righteous will be raised and that the wicked will be left in their present state forever. At other times the wicked seem to be included in their thinking on the resurrection. They will rise to be judged, and then pass into a state of torment forever. The righteous will be raised to have their share in the blessings of the kingdom. This resurrection was not thought of merely as the continued existence of the soul but included the body also. In one passage in the Apocalypse of Baruch (about A. D. 75) it is said that the dead will be raised in the same body and with the garments which they wore when they died. As soon as they have been recognized, and it is certain that they are the same people as those who died, they will be changed, and their bodies will assume the glorified form which they are to have forever. (Matt. 22:23-31;

Mark 12:18-23; Luke 20:27-33; John 11:24; Acts 23:6-8; 24:15.)

Messiah

Generally, though apparently not always, the expectation of a Messiah was connected with the hope of the kingdom. Messiah and Christ are equivalent terms, the one from the Hebrew language and the other from the Greek. If we translated them into English instead of transferring them as we do, we would speak of "the Anointed." When the Jews spoke of the Messiah they meant the Anointed, the one appointed of God for the final and complete deliverance of his people. Prevailingly, though not exclusively, it was believed that he would be of the line of David. Some had the idea that he would suddenly appear in a miraculous way, doing signs and wonders among the people. Others thought that one of their own number would be raised up among them and would be empowered by God for the work he was to do. The Messiah would be the chosen representative of God to set up the kingdom and execute judgment. (Matt. 2:4; Luke 2:26; 3:15; 20:41; John 1:20, 21, 41, 42; 3:28; 7:26, 27, 31, 41, 42; 12:34; Acts 2:31.)

Summary of Jewish Ideas

Many other special terms might be mentioned, but these are the most important ones and must suffice. This brief statement indicates that the Jews of Jesus' day believed in the God that we worship, and rejoiced in the law that he had given them. They looked and longed for his kingdom which would be inaugurated with a judgment of both the righteous and the wicked, including the dead who

would be raised. The righteous would enter the kingdom of blessing and the wicked a state of punishment. The Messiah would be the agent of God through whom he would carry out his purpose in all these things. He would be chosen and set apart and equipped by God for his work. In this circle of ideas and with this background Christianity arose. These are the prevalent religious ideas among those to whom the new faith was first preached. The central and distinctive message of that new faith is something else.

Jesus the Messiah

As we have already seen, Jesus himself was the very center of all the experience and thought of the early Christians. It has also been indicated that there was a very great variety of opinion among the people concerning him. But the conception held by the disciples seems clear. According to the testimony of the Gospel of John (1:41) the earliest idea expressed by any one of them was the statement of Andrew to Peter that in him they had found the Messiah. When, late in his ministry, Jesus specifically questioned them as to what they thought of him (Matt. 16:15, 16; Mark 8:29; Luke 9:20) Peter replied, "Thou art the Christ" (the Messiah, to use the Jewish term). This conception is reflected further in the early preaching of Peter and also in the recorded ministry of Paul as the message of both of these is reported to us in the book of Acts. (Matt. 16:16; 26:63; Mark 1:34; 8:29; 14:61; Luke 2:11; 4:41; 9:20; John 11:27; Acts 2:31, 36, 38; 3:6; 9:22; 17:3; 18:5, 28.) It seems clear that from the very early days of their association with Jesus the disciples began to think of him as

the Christ. This was the first "article of faith" which was held by these primitive Christians. It continued also to be a fundamental element of the belief in all the early church. The Gospel of John, which is usually held to be one of the later books of the New Testament, tells us in plain words (20:31) that the purpose of its writing was "that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ." As the term was used by the disciples it was at first scarcely more than the mere identification of Jesus as the chosen and sent one of God who was to restore the kingdom to Israel. (Matt. 20:21; Mark 10:37; Acts 1:6.) They had not yet entered into all the truth which was later to be shown to them. (John 16:12-15.) When they made confession of Jesus as the Messiah they were declaring their belief that he would set up the kingdom of God. It is evident that, despite the teaching of Jesus himself on this subject, there were many things they did not understand. But their faith in him was so strong that they believed he was the Messiah of God, even though they did not fully understand him and his mission.

Son of David

As indicated above it was the prevailing conception of the Jews in the time of Jesus that the Messiah would be of the line of David, and the preeminent successor of that great king. (Matt. 1:6; cf. 2 Sam. 7:13-15; Matt. 22:42; Mark 12:35; Luke 20:41; John 7:42.) At various times during his ministry there were those who hoped that Jesus might fulfil these dreams. (Matt. 9:27; 12:23; 20:30, 31; 21:9, 15; Mark 10:47, 48; 11:10; Luke 18:38, 39; 19:38.) The idea is given explicit expression in the term "the king of the Jews," which is

applied to him several times at the time of his trial and crucifixion (Matt. 27:11, 29, 42; Mark 15:2, 9, 18, 32; Luke 23:3, 37; John 18:33, 39; 19:3, 14), which is the charge lodged against him before Pilate, and the accusation in the superscription on the Cross. (Mark 15:12; Luke 23:2; cf. Matt. 27:17, 37; Mark 15:26; Luke 23:38; John 19:19, 21.) This conception lingered in the minds of the disciples of Jesus in the days following his death. Peter declared on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:36, 39) that the promise was to Israel, and at the great conference in Jerusalem James reminded those present that God was to raise again the tabernacle of David (Acts 15:16) even though Gentiles would be admitted into it. Both Matthew (1:1, 6) and Luke (1:27; 3:31) trace the genealogy of Jesus through David, and Paul finds the promise to Israel fulfilled in Jesus of the stock of David. (Acts 13:22, 23; Rom. 1:3; 2 Tim. 2:8.) The book of Revelation not only recognizes him as of the house of David, but also assigns to him the authority of the house. (Rev. 3:7; 5:5; 22:16.) Matthew (21:4, 5) and John (12:13) give the same interpretation to the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem as was given by the multitudes—that the Messiah, the Son of David, the king of the Jews, was making royal entry into his city. That the disciples did not lose their conception of the kingdom as national and political when they became followers of Jesus is amply attested. The conception is implicit and evident in the request of James and John for chief places with him (Matt. 20:20, 21; Mark 10:35-37); it is expressly assigned as the reason for the giving of the parable of The Pounds (Luke 19:11); it is implied in the sorrowful statement of the heavy-hearted disciples on the way to

Emmaus (Luke 24:21); it was the idea which Peter and the leaders in the church at Jerusalem found it so difficult to give up. (Acts 1:6; 10:1 to 11:18.) This narrow, inadequate conception was the occasion of the most critical situation which developed in the early apostolic days (Acts 15:1-29; Gal. 2:1-10; 2:11), and it was the one abiding problem which Paul faced and struggled with during most of his ministry. It is evident that Jesus had broken with this conception, and it was the special task of Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, to make the mind of Christ effective in the church. The book of Acts tells us the story of how the Holy Spirit guided the leaders of the early church from a narrow, provincial view of Jesus and the new faith into a world vision and a cosmopolitan faith.

Jesus Christ

The belief that Jesus was the Christ grew to supreme significance in the developing experience of these early disciples. They came to center all their life and hopes so completely upon him that the term "Christ" became a part of his name. More than two hundred and thirty times in the New Testament we have the name "Jesus Christ" or "Christ Jesus." What is even more suggestive is the dropping away of the personal name "Jesus" and the use of the single term "Christ" as the name of Jesus. About 245 times in the New Testament, about 200 of these being found in Paul, the word "Christ" is used in this way. It was originally a title applied to Jesus, but it has now become his proper name. This means that these early disciples had ceased to have any hopes or ideals concerning the kingdom of God except those that were centered in Jesus. He so completely fulfilled all

their expectations, and so fully satisfied all their longings that they could think of nothing to be desired that was not found in him. It is the confession of their belief that in him the complete and all-inclusive purpose of God has been revealed, and to him God has committed the mission of bringing to completion all he had planned and promised to his people. Outside of him nothing was left over to be said or done. It was this belief that fundamentally separated the Christian from the non-Christian.

Jesus as Lord

Closely connected with this conception of Jesus as the Christ is the thought of Jesus as Lord. In Acts 2:36 Peter sharply distinguishes the two terms, but at the same time brings them into close connection. He says that "God has made Jesus both Lord and Christ." In the light of the entire passage it is evident that Peter is emphasizing the authority of Jesus. (Cf. Acts 2:24, 25, 33-35; 10:36; 1 Peter 3:22.) He has been exalted to the right hand of power and the coming of the Spirit is the evidence of it. The term "Lord" is applied to Jesus more than 400 times in the New Testament, and it always, as here, carries the idea of authority. The conception is a favorite one with Paul, and in his writings several passages are highly illuminating in helping us to understand the thought. No one can say that Jesus is Lord (and mean it) but in the Holy Spirit. (1 Cor. 12:13.) The Lordship of Christ is the message which Paul preaches (2 Cor. 4:5) and the confession of Jesus as Lord is necessary to salvation. (Rom. 10:9.) He is Lord of both Jew and Gentile (Rom. 10:12), and Jesus died and rose again that he might be the Lord of both the dead and

the living. (Rom. 14:9.) All authority, even over death itself, has been committed unto him, and he will reign until he has put all under his feet. (1 Cor. 15:24-28.) The authority is not only supreme but unlimited, for God has given him "the name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:9, 10).

As Messiah, Jesus was the chosen representative of God in whom he would fulfil all his promises to his people. As Lord, Jesus had received all the authority of God who had sent him. The place assigned him in the kingdom of God was unshared and absolute.

Questions and Problems for Further Discussion

1. What was the meaning of the term Messiah as used among the Jews?

2. Study the titles applied to Jesus in the first days of the church in Jerusalem, and determine as accurately as possible what was meant by each of them.

3. What was the process of experience and thought whereby the term Christ passed from an official title to a proper name?

4. Study the meaning of the term Son of God as first used in Christian preaching.

5. Distinguish the inherited and the creative beliefs of the first generation of Christians.

6. Formulate a carefully discriminating confession of faith which you believe the church in Jerusalem might have adopted.

IV

THE GOSPEL OF THE CROSS

The Word of the Cross

The most striking characteristic of the Christian message is its emphasis upon what Paul calls the "word of the cross" (1 Cor. 1:18). The cross was originally a badge of shame. It was the instrument by which the Romans put to death the vilest criminals and those upon whom they would place the heaviest stamp of dishonor. But the instrument and sign of disgrace and infamy became in the new Christian faith the symbol of glory, and the center of its most distinctive message. It is the one fact in the career of Christ in which the great apostle would glory. (Gal. 6:14.) Such a change of attitude and of conception of the cross calls for explanation, and the consideration of the matter will lead us to the very heart of the gospel.

The Unwelcome Announcement

It is well to return frequently to the Gospels for the starting-points of our discussion. Somewhat more than six months before his death Jesus began "to show unto his disciples that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day rise again" (Matt. 16:21; Mark 8:31). The disciples were shocked at the announcement and Peter began to rebuke Jesus, saying, "Mercy on you, Lord, this shall never be unto thee" (Matt. 16:22). Not only was the fact of death for Jesus entirely absent

from their thoughts, but they absolutely rejected the idea when Jesus announced it. The thought was not only unwelcome, but seemed to them wholly inconsistent with their belief in Jesus as the Christ. If he were the Christ he could not die. Messiahship and death did not belong together in their thinking. The action of Peter reflects the love and loyalty of the Twelve to Jesus, but it also exhibits their utter repudiation of the idea of his death.

The Disciples Slow to See

Jesus repeated the announcement of his death a number of times, but the Gospels give plain testimony to the fact that the disciples were still slow to understand what he meant. Matthew tells us (Matt. 17:22, 23) that the second time they heard about it "they were exceeding sorry," and Mark (9:31, 32) and Luke (9:44, 45) tell us that they did not understand what he meant and were afraid to ask him about it. As they were on the last journey up to Jerusalem, at the time when Jesus was crucified, he again made a special effort to impress his coming death on his disciples. But again they did not understand what he was saying. (Matt. 20:17-19; Mark 10:32-34; Luke 18:31-34.) These plain statements of the Gospels concerning their failure to understand Jesus are illustrated over and over again in the story. When the announcements of Jesus were finally fulfilled and his death had been accomplished by the authorities, the disciples were stunned. It seemed to them that all was lost. They had hoped that he was going to assert his Messianic claims and set up the kingdom, perhaps on this very visit to Jerusalem. (Luke 24:21; cf. Mark 10:35-37; Matt. 20:20, 21.) But now he was dead and buried, and all their

hopes were buried with him. Expectation had given way to disillusionment, and joy had been replaced by gloom. (Luke 24:17, 25.) They still saw no meaning in his death except that it had banished all their hopes for the establishment of the kingdom, and seemed to make it perfectly clear that they had been mistaken in their belief that he was the Messiah. The Messiah could not die.

Their Jewish Preconceptions

What made them "so slow of heart to believe"? (Luke 24:25.) From John 12:34 we learn that the Jewish multitude had the same idea about this whole matter that the disciples had. When they heard Jesus talking about his death, by being "lifted up" (on the cross), they said, "We have heard out of the law that the Christ abideth forever; and how sayest thou that the Son of man must be lifted up?" They mean to say that their conception of the Messiah is that he does not die. They expected not a suffering but a conquering Christ. That was the ordinary Jewish idea. (Gal. 5:11; 1 Cor. 1:23.) This understanding was shared by the disciples in common with their Jewish brethren, and when they became followers of Jesus they carried it along with them. Even their devoted loyalty to Jesus could not overcome their prejudices, and his statements fell on deaf ears. The idea of a suffering Messiah was so new and so different from all their conceptions that they simply could not take it in. "The saying was hid from them, and they understood none of these things."

A Change of View

We have already indicated in a previous chapter the crucial importance of the resurrection of Jesus in the ex-

perience of the disciples. It was the basic fact to which they bore testimony in all their preaching. But it was more than a fact; it was a fact with a meaning. In the light of it they began to reshape their thinking on many points. Among these and by no means the least of them, was the matter of the death of Jesus. To be sure, they still regarded it as a great crime on the part of those who were responsible for it (Acts 2: 23; 3:13-15; 4:10, 11, 27, 28; 5:30; 10:39), even though they acknowledged that it had been done in ignorance rather than in malice. (Acts 3:17; cf. 1 Cor. 2:8; 1 Tim. 1:13.) But this phase of the matter was more and more lost sight of, and finally receded almost wholly into the background. The death which they had so emphatically repudiated when it was first announced, had now come to have so much meaning for them that it was regarded as the glory of the gospel, and was a constant element in their preaching.

The Reason for Change

The Gospels and Acts suggest four specific reasons for the disciples' change of mind with respect to the death of Jesus. In the first place it is said that the disciples remembered the teaching of Jesus while he was still with them. He had repeatedly announced his suffering, death, and resurrection. As they looked back now they were able to realize that the death had been clearly foreseen by Jesus, and he had not been overtaken by a sudden surprise. This helped them to understand certain things in his teaching which they could not see before. (Luke 24:6-8; Matt. 17:9; Mark 9:9, 10; John 2:22.) In the second place it is indicated that they had a new understanding of the Old Testament Scriptures. Repeatedly we are told that

their minds were opened that they might understand the Scriptures as they had not understood them before. This new view of the Scriptures is apparent in their preaching and was evidently one of the points of emphasis in their new message. (Luke 24:25-27, 44-47; John 2:22; 12:16; 20:9; Acts 3:18; 4:25, 26; 8:32-35; 1 Cor. 15:3.) In the third place, we read that Jesus himself gave them instruction with reference to the Scriptures and led them to see that his death had been foreseen and foretold from of old. This was in line with what he had already taught them, but it was not until this time that they were able to see it. (Note especially Luke 24:25-27, 44-47.) In the fourth place, it is implied that the Holy Spirit illuminated their minds and hearts in all these things (Acts 1:2, 3) which is in exact accordance with the words of Jesus as reported to us in the Gospel of John. (14:26; 16:12-14.) Just what relation these several factors sustained to each other and what part each had in the total influence exerted upon the minds of the disciples, is not fully set forth. It is clear, however, that the new interpretation of the death of Christ which the disciples had is traced back to Jesus himself. The death which had been their stumbling-block (1 Cor. 1:23) now becomes the ground of their confidence. It had been something dark which shut out the light. It now becomes the window through which the light streams.

Jesus Servant

The announcement of the death of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament Scriptures was, of course, understood to be the announcement of God himself. This meant that it was a part of his own plan and counsel as Peter repeatedly

asserts. (Acts 2:23; 3:18; 4:28.) The disciples saw in him the servant of God who is spoken of in Isaiah (notably chapter 53). It is clear that this passage from the prophet was much in their minds. It is clear also that they identify Jesus as this servant, and his experience with the experience of the servant as there outlined. As the Anointed Servant of God his death was in the plan of God. (Acts 3:13, 26; 4:25-27, 30; cf. Matt. 12:17, 18.) Various other designations of Jesus are used in the sermons of these early Christians and severally give special emphasis to some of the points already mentioned. They are, however, all in accord with the central thought of the message which they preached. The New Testament evidence enables us to see that from the first days of their ministry the leaders of the church included the death of Christ in their preaching. The rulers had put forth their hand against the Lord's Anointed, but it was all in the divine counsels. Jesus was God's Anointed Servant (Acts 4:27), appointed for his people (Acts 4:20), and the suffering which he had experienced was all in the divine appointment.

Jesus Saviour

But more than this is implied. Peter expressly mentions that God had raised up Jesus as a " Prince and a Saviour to give repentance to Israel and remission of sins " (Acts 5:31). Several times in these early discourses he connects the suffering of Christ with salvation from sin through repentance. (Acts 2:38; 3:18, 19; 4:12; 5:31; 10:43.) This conception is already involved in the use of the term Servant, but Peter makes explicit in these passages what is implicit in other parts of his message.

In the first letter of Peter (1:9-11; 2:21-24; 3:18) the same thought is set forth clearly, though no elaborate explanation of their exact relation is given. Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 15:3 that he had received (from those before him) not only that Christ died according "to the Scriptures," but also that he "died for our sins." It is true that Paul does not tell us just when he received this word, nor does he indicate how long it had been held by those from whom he received it. However, our evidence seems clear enough that it had been a part of the gospel preaching from the very early days of the church. Of course Jesus himself had spoken of it to his disciples. (Matt. 20:28; Mark 10:45; Matt. 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20.) But if, as we have seen, they were unable to accept the fact of his death, they were all the more unable to understand its meaning as they did later. It was only during the days after they had become assured of his resurrection that they connected his death with their salvation. They had expected deliverance through a conquering Messiah. They now look for salvation through a suffering Saviour.

The New Testament View

This view of the death of Christ is common to all the New Testament. The emphasis of the various books is not always the same, nor do the different writers always express the thought in the same terms. But behind the various forms of expression lies one general conception. The letter to the Hebrews is one of the most distinctive books in all the New Testament so far as form of expression is concerned. Jesus is there spoken of as the great High Priest, "who has offered himself without blemish

unto God" (Heb. 9:14), "once for all" (Heb. 7:27; 9:12; 10:10), and has thereby "obtained eternal redemption" for us. (Heb. 9:12.) If we turn aside from it "there remaineth no more any sacrifice for sins" (Heb. 10:26) and we are living in a world which is for us as if Christ had not died. The language is unique and very striking, but the thought which it expresses is the common thought of the New Testament.

Paul's Gospel

This common conception is taken up by Paul and greatly elaborated. He seems to all but exhaust his power of language in trying to set forth "the unsearchable riches of Christ" (Eph. 3:8). For him "the word of the cross" is the only gospel for it is "the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. 1:16), and there is no other way. (Phil. 3:3-11.) In the cross alone he glories (Gal. 6:14), and he has but one message for all—the message of "Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Cor. 1:23; 2:2). Christ has broken down "the middle wall of partition" between Jew and Gentile and made both one. (Eph. 2:11-18.) The great passage in Romans 3:21-26 condenses the apostle's thought into a few sentences whose full meaning cannot be set forth in many pages. But it is as clear as evidence can make it that he sees the cross as the one method by which God deals with the problem of sin and of forgiveness which is available to all alike upon the simple basis of faith in Christ. Christ in his death is the showing forth of God's righteousness, and the revelation of his love. (Rom. 3:25, 26; 5:6-8.) He is God's offering (Rom. 3:25; 8:32) but his death does not avail anything for us unless we make response in faith. (Rom.

3:25-28, 30.) To be sure, "the word of the cross is to them that are perishing foolishness, but to those that are being saved it is the power of God" (1 Cor. 1:18). The other apostles and preachers of the early church shared Paul's view of the death of Christ in relation to salvation. They have given us their own unique and wonderful contribution to the full-orbed gospel. But it has remained for Paul to become the one great and unrivaled preacher of the Cross. It had meant so much in his own experience that he simply exults in it. He who can read Paul without a quickening of pulse and a surge of emotion does not understand him, or else does not know a great soul when he meets him. Thank God all your days for this man. His influence is the greatest in Christian history next to that of the Master whom he loved in such grateful humility, preached with such passionate conviction, and served with such matchless devotion.

Jesus the Son

In Acts 9:20 we read that immediately following Paul's conversion he preached in the synagogue that Jesus was the Son of God. A comparison of this statement with that in Acts 9 : 22 suggests that the term "Son of God" was understood as essentially equivalent to the term Messiah. This is in line with the Old Testament usage. The Son of David who is to be the king of Israel is there spoken of as the Son of God. (2 Sam. 7:14; 1 Chron. 17:13, 14; 22:10; Ps. 2:7; 89:20-37.) It appears also to have been a designation of the Messiah among the Jews in the time of Jesus. (Matt. 26:63; 27:40, 43; Luke 22: 70; cf. John 20:31.) It implied that the Messiah was in a peculiarly intimate relation with God. He was the

object of God's love as a son of his father's love, and he represented God in Israel as a son represents his father.

The Only Son

But the term is used throughout the New Testament with a still deeper meaning. Paul is the first of the apostles who is specifically said to have used the term in his preaching (Acts 9:20; cf. 1 Thess. 1:10), but it is a part of the message of them all. Passages of special importance are found in the words of the Evangelists and others (Luke 1:35; Matt. 3:17; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22; Matt. 16:16; Mark 8:29; Luke 9:20; Matt. 17:5; Mark 9:7; Luke 9:35; cf. 2 Peter 1:17; John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; cf. 1 John 4:9), in the writings of Paul (Rom. 1:4; cf. Acts 13:33; Rom. 1:9; 8:3, 29, 32; 1 Cor. 1:9; 2 Cor. 1:19; Gal. 1:16; 2:20; 4:4, 6; Eph. 4:13; Col. 1:13), in Hebrews (1:5, 8; 4:14; 5:8; 7:3, 28; 10:29), and in the writings of John. (1 John 1:3, 7; 2:22; 3:8, 23; 5:13; 4:10, 14; 5:5, 9, 10, 12, 20; 2 John 3; Rev. 2:18.) In all of these writings the term is used to affirm or imply the most fundamental and intimate personal relation possible between Jesus and God. He is Son of God in a sense in which no other does or may sustain such relation. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9). "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself" (2 Cor. 5:19). "God hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4:6). "In him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9). "He was the very image of his person, and the shining forth of his glory" (Heb. 1:3). To the early church Christ was the very presence of God

himself. In the glory and grace of that presence they rejoiced "with joy unspeakable."

The Gospel of God

"The gospel of the glory of the blessed God," wrote the great Christian warrior (1 Tim. 1:11), and in so doing expressed the mind and the heart of the early church. It was this great conviction that gave the cross such rich significance in all their thought. It was not something which had been done to God or for God, it was something which had been done by God. In it God had revealed his yearning love, and his holy purpose to bring them into his fellowship as the children of a father. In it he had done everything that even God could do to redeem them and bring them into the kingdom of his love and grace. The unmerited and amazing grace of God which they saw expressed in the cross burst upon their minds with such dazzling glory and compelling power as to lead them captive in gratitude and love. The New Testament is athrob with the very heart life of those early Christians, who saw in the cross of Christ the offering of the Son of the eternal love of the Father. (Acts 13:23; 15:11; 20:24, 32; Rom. 1:1; 3:24; 5:5, 15; 8:32, 35, 39; 2 Cor. 5:14; 9:14, 15; 10:1; Gal. 2:20; 4:4; Eph. 1:6; 2:4, 5, 7; 3:7, 19; 5:25; 1 Thess. 1:5; 2:8, 9; 1 Peter 4:17; John 3:16; 13:1; 19:7; 1 John 2:5; 4:9, 10, 11, 14; 5:20; Heb. 4:14; 10:29; Rev. 1:5.) John 3:16 has been called "the little gospel." It is the "big gospel." It contains in a sentence the only gospel the New Testament writers knew. This message has always been the heart of the Christian gospel, and it must continue to be so. "After Jesus it is his religion or none,"

writes one of the leading New Testament scholars of the day. And Dr. T. R. Glover has tersely written, "For us it is Jesus or nobody." We may truly add to this what the earliest preachers of Christianity felt so deeply, "After John 3:16 or Romans 8:32 it is this gospel or none." Here it is, shining straight out of the heart of God. It is ours, and we glory in it.

Questions and Problems for Further Discussion

1. Why did the followers of Jesus reject his plain teaching that he must die?

2. They made a notable change in their attitude. What were the principal reasons for the change?

3. How much of the Old Testament teaching concerning the Messiah contains teaching as to his death?

4. Study Paul's gospel of the Cross. What did the cross reveal to Paul? What did it accomplish, as Paul interprets it?

5. Explain how the cross changed from a badge of shame to a symbol of glory.

6. State as accurately as possible what you believe to be the main features of the gospel for today.

V

JESUS THE TEACHER

Back to Christ—*With the Apostles*

Thus far our discussion has given attention primarily to the preaching of the early Christians. We have noticed in a very brief outline what they thought and said *about* Jesus in reference to his whole life and mission. The constant implication has been, however, that behind the teaching of the apostles lay the teaching of Jesus himself. It is interesting to observe that the Gospels, in which the teaching of Jesus is found, were written for the second generation of Christians. (Luke 1:1, 2; John 20:31.) Paul's letters were written before our Gospels, and in these letters we seldom find any reference to the teaching of Jesus. It is evident that he knows a great deal concerning Jesus' life, but he agrees with the other early leaders in the church in referring to the Old Testament in support of his preaching rather than to the teaching of Jesus. However, they carried these things in their minds, and when the gospel began to be given to those who had not had the opportunity of knowing of Jesus at first hand, the material began to be put into written form, in order that the certainty of that which Jesus had done and said might be given to those who were interested. (Luke 1:3, 4.) Inasmuch as at a certain point in the life of these early Christians the teaching of Jesus himself became a matter of primary concern, we may well follow their example. We have followed them in their teaching *about* Jesus. Let us go with them to the teaching *of* Jesus.

The Method of Approach

Very frequently we come to Jesus with a set of questions which we have already formulated for ourselves and seek from him an answer to them. In this way we can learn much from him, but it can never be the true method of approach if we are really to understand him. We must come to him not only to find out what he may say in answer to our questions, but to learn what he thinks are the important questions to ask. Jesus is God's revelation to men. What he said to us is vital. But his perspective and proportion and emphasis in teaching are vital too. What did Jesus talk about? Where did he place his emphasis? What was he most desirous of having us understand? These matters are important, and we do not honor him as we should, and we will not understand him as we desire, if we do not come to him with an open mind, and let him say to us what he wants to say.

Jesus a Practical Teacher

One of the very first things that impresses us in the teaching of Jesus is its practical character. He is a teacher of life. Many of the speculations with which teachers among the Jews in his day were spending time appear to have had no interest for him. Men have often disputed over matters which he never mentions, and which he evidently did not consider it important to think about. He came that we might have life and that abundingly (John 10:10), and that expresses his primary interest. This, of course, is not to say that Jesus had no theology, or that he taught nothing that might be described as doctrinal. That would not be true. Indeed his teachings are all doctrines,

for doctrine is only a Latin word for teaching. But his interests were all vital, they were related to people, and they had a very practical end in view. He taught in simple language, so that "the common people heard him gladly" (Mark 12:37). He intended to be understood by any one who was interested enough to listen.

The Note of Authority

Another very striking feature of Jesus' teaching is the quiet authority with which he speaks. He never gives the impression of being a fellow searcher with those to whom he speaks. He knows. He is not a fellow pilgrim striving along the way with others. He always teaches with a certainty that is unique, and that sets him apart from all those whom he addresses. He is master, and they are his pupils. (John 13:13.) This note of authority was one of the first things in Jesus' teaching to attract attention, and we read a number of times that the people "were astonished at his teaching; for he taught as one having authority and not as the scribes" (Mark 1:22; Matt. 7:28, 29; 11:28; 8:9; 21:23; 28:18; Luke 4:32; 20:21). A careful reading of the Sermon on the Mount indicates clearly what it was that so amazed the people. Jesus repeatedly says, "You have heard that it was said, but I say unto you." He thus sets himself over against all those whom they were accustomed to hear. Their teaching was based upon tradition, but Jesus goes no farther than his own person and life for the authority of the truth he presents. About 49 times in the Gospels Jesus uses the expression "I say unto you," and it is the expression of his own certainty and sense of authority. We today still feel the majesty and power of it.

Jesus the Critic

This consciousness of his authority is disclosed not only in the method of Jesus which contrasts so sharply with that of the Jewish teachers of his time, but in his sharp criticism of their traditions as well. This is seen in both his deeds and his words. He frequently offends them by his disregard of certain laws which they regard as binding, such, for example, as fasting (Matt. 9:14; Mark 2:18; Luke 5:33), and the Sabbath. (Matt. 12:1, 2; Mark 2:23, 24; Luke 6:1, 2; Matt. 12:10-13; Mark 3:1-6; Luke 6:6-11; John 5:10, 11; 7:21-23.) He severely criticizes their conduct under their tradition in the matter of things devoted to Jehovah (Matt. 15:1-6; Mark 7:1-13) and declares that they do many such things. He does not hesitate in at least one instance to become a critic of the law of Moses (Matt. 19:3-8; Mark 10:2-9) and say that it was in violation of the fundamental law of God, and only of temporary significance. God has never intended that for which Moses made provision, and those who acted under the law of Moses in the matter of divorce committed sin. Not only in these particulars which have been mentioned but also in the whole tone and tenor of his teaching Jesus without hesitation makes his own teaching superior to all else (John 10:8) and his quiet assumption of authority is very impressive. (Matt. 12:41, 42; Luke 11:31, 32.)

Jesus the Truth

But we have a still more significant element in his teaching. He not only speaks that which he knows (John 3:11) but he is himself the truth. He not only announces the

life, he is the life; he not only points the way, he is the way. (John 14:6.) About 160 times in the Gospel story Jesus presents himself as the embodiment of the truth he teaches. He never at any time gives the slightest impression of having in any way failed in his own personal life, or of wanting to be better than he is. On the contrary, he asserts that he does always those things that please God (John 8:29) and challenges any one to convict him of sin and wrong-doing. (John 8:46.) The truth he presents, and the life he offers, are embodied in his own life. "Never man so spake," said the officers who were sent to arrest him. (John 7:32, 46.) They were seeking to present an excuse for failure to do their duty. But their words are true to the facts. They spoke more truly than they knew.

The Fountain of Experience

This is another way of saying that the teachings of Jesus were the expression of his own experience. What he had to say to others was not something he had heard or read, but something he knew (John 3:11) in his own experience. The truth he would give us for our living was truth which he had wrought out in the laboratory of his own life. One of the oldest heresies in the history of the Christian centuries is that which holds that Jesus was not really a man but only appeared to be. He was a divine being masquerading in the semblance of a man. Of course, this is a flat contradiction of the New Testament. (Acts 2:22; Rom. 5:15, 19; 1 Cor. 15:21, 47; Phil. 2:7, 8; 1 Tim. 2:5; cf. John 9:16, 24; 10:33; 11:47, 50; 18:14, 17, 29; 19:5; Acts 5:28.) The New Testament teaches plainly that Jesus not only had the form and

appearance of a man, but that he entered into the very deepest experiences of man—save one only, that of sin. In his great poem, *Saul,* Browning gives us in the words of David a statement of a deep human longing which the New Testament assures us is answered in Christ.

'Tis the weakness in strength that I cry for! my flesh, that I seek
In the Godhead! I seek, and I find it. Oh Saul, it shall be
A Face like my face that receives thee; a Man like to me,
Thou shalt love and be loved by, forever: A Hand like this hand
Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee! See the Christ stand!

The Growth of Experience

In the early years of his life Jesus had a normal growth. This growth was not only physical, but included his inner life as well. It was not only mental but spiritual (Luke 2:40, 51, 52), and involved his relation to God. This growth did not stop with his entrance upon his public ministry. In Hebrews 2:7 we read that "Jesus learned obedience from that which he suffered." This statement, as the context shows, carries us up to the very close of Jesus' life. He not only grew, but he continued to grow throughout his life. He became weary (John 4:6; Mark 7:24), thirsty (John 4:7; cf. 19:28), hungry (John 4:31, 33; Matt. 11:19; Luke 7:34; Mark 2:16; Matt. 9:11; Luke 5:30; 14:1), and sleepy. (Mark 4:38; Matt. 8:24; Luke 8:23, 24.) He experienced the feelings of man. (Matt. 9:30; Mark 1:41, 43; 3:5; John 11:33, 38.)

The Depth of Experience

"It is a commonplace among those who study literature that that which reaches the heart must come from the heart," says Dr. T. R. Glover. Not only is this statement

true, but it is further true that one can reach in another life the same level as that from which his words come in his own life. To use words which I once heard Dr. C. S. Scofield use, "You can plow another life as deep as you have been plowed."

He was tempted (tested) in all points like as we are, yet without sin (Heb. 4:15), and it is this experience which enables him to understand and help us. (Heb. 2:18.) Jesus speaks home to the deepest needs and experiences of our lives because he has himself lived in them. If he knows our problems it is because he has faced them in the depths of his own life. When he speaks to us of struggle he speaks out of the "unplumbed deeps" of his own experience. The story of his soul struggle in the wilderness (Matt. 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13), or in Gethsemane (Matt. 26:36-46; Mark 14:32-42; Luke 22:39-46) can be duplicated a number of times from other accounts in the Gospels. These must be taken at face value. There was no camouflage or masquerade here. If ever a soul faced a dark and bitter hour, Jesus faced it here. Into the dark he went alone (John 16:32)—except for the Father. He went full of amazement, perplexity, and agony. (Matt. 26:38; Mark 14:33, 34; Luke 22:44.) His soul was wrung with the anguish of the hour. And there he drank his cup to the dregs. (Matt. 26:39, 42; Mark 14:36; Luke 22:42; cf. Matt. 20:23; Mark 10:39.)

Into the woods my Master went,
Clean forspent, forspent.

Out of the woods my Master went,
And he was well content.
Out of the woods my Master came,
Content with death and shame.

But none of the ransomed ever knew
How deep were the waters crossed,
Or how dark was the night that the Lord passed through
Ere he found his sheep that was lost.

The Height of Experience

But it is not less evident that Jesus speaks to us of victory. When he talks of mastery, of conquest, he speaks to us out of his own winning. He won in the loneliness and the quiet, and in the open is always the master of poise and power. He seems always to speak to us from *above*. This is not because he had not lived, but because he had lived. He is the Master because he first went to the bottom with the problem, and then went to the top with the solution. It is in this phase of the matter that we find the most significant elements of his experience. At the very point where he seems nearest us, he at the same time seems far removed. Where we go in to struggle, he goes too. But where we go in to fall, he goes in to stand. Where we go to lose, he goes to win. Where we go to defeat, he goes to victory. It is our deep consolation that he enters the shadows with us. It is our unspeakable strength and joy that he comes forth a conqueror—even when we feel the sting of defeat.

The Master Experience

He is our example—our example in love, sympathy, kindness, service, forgiveness, and self-denial. Is he not our example in faith too? Yes, for we are to look "unto Jesus the author and finisher of faith" (Heb. 12:1, 2). Wherever we might have to go that he has not been he could not be our leader. In Dante's *Divine Comedy*

Vergil could be his leader toward the Rose of the Blessed to a certain point, and then he had to turn Dante over to Beatrice. Vergil had no experience that enabled him to lead farther. Our Master does not need to turn us over to another. "He knows the way we take, for he has walked that way before." If he had not lived he could not have taught us to live. If he had not struggled he would not know our struggles. If he had not conquered he could not be our captain. He is the Master Teacher because he has had the master experience.

The Messenger and the Message

At this point the question very naturally meets us whether Jesus thinks of himself as a part of the message he brings. It has been frequently argued, and very brilliantly at times, that Jesus announced a gospel in which there was no place for him but for the Father only. Jesus was a spokesman, a messenger, a very great prophet, indeed, but a prophet only. That conception which is commonly held by Christians in which Jesus is himself a part of his own message must be regarded as an unwarranted addition to his teaching.

The Gospel Evidence

An inspection of our Gospels discloses a very striking difference in their testimony on this point. Our first three Gospels together contain about thirty-five instances in which Jesus presents himself in connection with his message, while the Gospel of John alone contains one hundred and twenty-five such passages. But when we have given due consideration to this great difference in emphasis, it still remains true that Jesus' teaching on this

point in our first three Gospels is very impressive. In the earlier part of his ministry as reflected in these Gospels Jesus seems to have been thinking and teaching on subjects in which his own significance is not a matter of emphasis. With the confession of Peter at Cæsarea Philippi that he is the Christ a new note entered his teaching, and a new spirit seems to have taken possession of him. (Matt. 16:21; Mark 8:31; Luke 9:21, 22.) Very soon after this "he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem" (Luke 9:51), and he went forward with an intensity and an abandon that amazed and awed his disciples. (Mark 10:32.) It is in this period that he gave special attention to the significance and the meaning of his own career.

The Great Saying

It was probably the earlier part of this period in which we are to locate the great word of Jesus which is reported in Matthew 11:27 and Luke 10:22. It has often been remarked that these passages contain as high claims for Jesus as is to be found anywhere in the Gospel of John. Jesus here not only affirms a peculiarly intimate and unique knowledge of God, but also asserts that he himself occupies a very distinct and unshared position as the personal channel through whom the Father may be known. He, and only he, truly knows the Father, and others may know him only as Jesus himself may make him known. The statement made in these passages is not duplicated in the same terms anywhere else in our first three Gospels; but similar ideas are expressed in a considerable number of passages, and the unique and unparalleled significance of Jesus is emphasized. (Matt. 7:21-23; 9:3-6; 10:32, 33,

37-39; 11:28-30; 12:28-32; 16:27; Mark 2:10; 3:27-29; 8:34, 38; 9:37; Luke 5:21-24; 9:26, 27; 10:22; 11:19-23; 12:8, 9, 49; 13:26, 27; 14:26, 27; 19:11; 22:29.) On the basis of these statements the evidence is perfectly clear that Jesus claimed for himself a unique place in relation to the Father, an indispensable importance in relation to his own message.

The Father and the Son

We have already observed the emphasis on such ideas in the Gospel of John. The passages are so numerous that only a few of the most explicit ones may be cited, such as 8:15-29; 10:15-18, 30-38; 12:49, 50; 16:27; 17:3; 19:7. To be sure, some of the references of the Gospels suggest the same representative relation between Jesus and his disciples as is affirmed between God and Jesus. (Matt. 10:40, 41; 16:19; 18:18; Mark 9:37; Luke 10:16; 18:17; John 14:12; 17:21-23; 20:21-23.) There should be no disposition to minimize the statements which these passages contain; but with due recognition of all they declare or imply the evidence is still very clear that Jesus presented himself as a significant part of the message he had to announce. He was the one through whom the disciples might enter into fellowship with the Father, because he was the one in whom the Father had come to them. He was the meeting-point of God and man. He had not only come from God, but in him they see God himself. Their relation is that of Father and Son. In coming to him in personal fellowship we come to God. He is the Son of the Father, and in him the Father is present. This is the central fact of his experience, and the fountain out of which all his teaching flows.

Questions and Problems for Further Discussion

1. What is the true method of approach to the study of the teaching of Jesus?

2. Study the note of authority in the teaching of Jesus, and consider carefully whence it was derived.

3. What was Jesus' conception of the relation of his teaching to the Old Testament? To the Jewish teaching of his day?

4. Consider how far the teaching of Jesus was the reflection of his own experience, and how much of it, if any, was not so derived.

5. What elements were common in the experience of both Jesus and his followers? What elements were peculiar to him?

6. What place did Jesus have in his own message?

VI

THE CENTRAL EMPHASES OF JESUS' TEACHING

The Experience Controlling

In the last chapter we discussed the experience of Jesus as the source of his teaching. We saw that the truth which Jesus gave to others was first in his own experience and embodied in his own life. Our previous discussion has also indicated that the life and experience of Jesus were unique. He stood out, and he stands out, from all others and reveals in himself that which is not found elsewhere. Since this life was so unique it is not difficult to see that his teaching which unfolds it must also be unique. The factors that shaped the life will also mold his interpretation of the life. The central features of the experience will become the major emphases of the teaching.

Jesus His Own Interpreter

The analysis of the life and experience of any one is difficult, and the determination of its inner meaning is a task that requires the most patient and sympathetic effort. If we had to depend altogether upon our own insight and understanding we should have to confess that in Jesus there are depths we could not hope to fathom. Any one has a right to be his own interpreter. In the case of Jesus this was not only his right, but, to our great gratitude and satisfaction, he made use of it. He came that he might bear witness of the truth (John 18:37), and he did

not keep the deeper things of his own life hidden. (John 15:15.) It is not always easy to understand even when he tells us, but we have the great advantage of his own word for our guidance.

The Fellowship and the Teaching

In a passage which we are to discuss later Jesus gives as the " first and great commandment " the injunction to love God. This means that he is primarily a religious teacher. All of his ethical and social message grows out of his religion. This fact is explicitly indicated by Jesus in his frequent assertion that God is the source of his teaching, and that he speaks always those things which he received from God. (John 3:11; 4:34; 5:19; 7:16; 8:29, 38; 12:50—to mention some of the leading passages.) If we try to understand Jesus primarily as a teacher of social morality, however high and worthy, we are reversing his own order of emphasis and are doomed to failure. His entire life in all of its relations was determined by his relation to God. Out of this fountain also came all his teaching. To seek any other approach to his message is to shut our eyes to the plain facts and to close the door to any true understanding of him.

Jesus and Judaism

It is desirable to recall at this point certain facts that were emphasized and sketched in Chapter IV. Jesus was speaking originally to the Jews to whom God was real. Israel was a religious nation, their great contribution to history is a religious one, and the religious leaders of the people were scrupulous in their observance of the demands and regulations of their religion. Basic in all the religion

of Israel was their belief in Jehovah their God. To have addressed to them an argument to prove the existence of God would have been as idle as to have made an argument to prove to them the existence of the sun. They had no more doubt of the one than the other. They lived in the simple assumption and acceptance of both. The God of Israel (Mark 12:29), of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Matt. 22:32; Mark 12:26; Luke 20:37), was the God both of the Jews and of Jesus. Jesus could therefore start from this common ground and give emphasis to the needed practical implications of this basic belief. The cardinal teaching of Jesus concerning God can be appreciated better if we indicate briefly certain assumptions which underlie his teaching, and which he evidently held in common with the Judaism of his day.

God as Spirit

There is one passage in the Gospel of John (4:24) in which on a first reading Jesus might be understood to be emphasizing a theoretical conception with respect to God. However, a more attentive reading of the passage, especially the full context of verses 20-24, indicates that Jesus has a very practical matter in mind. The question of the Samaritan woman evidently reflects a very faulty idea of God, as well as a very superficial and inadequate idea of worship. Jesus makes clear to her in his answer that God is not a local divinity, proper worship of whom is to be restricted to a particular locality. God is spirit, and true worship of him is dependent upon the spirit of the worshiper, and not at all upon the place where he is worshiped. Only those who worship in spirit and truth really worship God at all. The emphasis is upon true worship.

God and the World

The Jewish teachers of Jesus' day, as well as the prophets of the Old Testament, give very clear and emphatic expression to the belief in one, and only one, true God. This is so much a matter of course with us that it is not easy for us to realize that it has not always been so. In both Old and New Testament times there were many among the nations who had a different view. But it was the common Jewish conception (Matt. 27:40; Mark 12:32, 33; 14:61; 15:32; Luke 23:35), and while Jesus rarely speaks to this point it is perfectly evident that he makes the same assumption. (Mark 12:29, 30; John 5:42; 17:3.) This God is Lord of heaven and earth (Matt. 5:34, 35; 11:25-27; 23:22; Luke 10:21, 22); he created the world and all things therein (Mark 10:6; 13:19; 16:15; cf. Gen. 1:1; Isa. 42:5; 45:18); he is a living God who is still at work in the world. (Matt. 22:32; 26:63; Mark 12:27; Luke 20:38; John 5:17, 36.) He sends the sunshine and the rain upon all (Matt. 5:44); he clothes the grass with its verdure and the lilies of the field with their beauty. (Matt. 6:28-30; Luke 12:27, 28.) The birds are fed by him, and not even a small sparrow falls to the ground without his notice. (Matt. 6:26; 10:29; Luke 12:6, 24.) He is the one supreme ruler in the world, he created it, he is now at work in it, and he gives it all its beauty and fruitfulness.

God and Man

But God's relation to man was a matter of much greater significance for both Jesus and the Jewish teachers of his day than was his relation to the world. He created man

and is interested in the minutest thing affecting his welfare. (Mark 10:6; Matt. 19:4; 10:30; Luke 12:7.) God not only knows the needs of men before they are presented to him, but he is also ready to bestow his material blessings upon all; indeed, he does so impartially upon all alike, whether just or unjust. (Matt. 5:43-48; 6:8; 7:11; 6:26-33; Luke 6:35, 36; 12:22-31; 11:13.)

God and His Kingdom

But it would be a serious mistake to suppose that Jesus laid stress upon the material gifts of God. To be sure, as just indicated, these have their place in his thought, but they are of secondary significance. It is after these things that the Gentiles seek, and emphasis upon them as central and primary reflects a pagan conception of life and God. (Matt. 6:32.) Our first concern should be the kingdom of God and his righteousness (Matt. 6:33), for that is the first concern of God. If we do thus place the kingdom of God first, we may expect God to give the great blessing of the kingdom and in addition thereto the lesser and secondary blessings of a material kind. (Matt. 6:25-34.)

God the Father

A careful reading of the Gospels makes it perfectly clear that the term which Jesus most frequently used to designate God was Father. The conception reflected in this term underlies the whole of his teaching as to God and is the basis of all the major notes in his appeal. It is at this point that Jesus makes his distinctive contribution to our thinking about God; it is here that we reach the idea that controlled all that he said. It would, however, be incorrect to say that Jesus had no background for this

conception in the Old Testament and the Judaism of his day. With him the idea received a new emphasis and a more dominant place in his teaching, but it had its antecedents in the thought and teaching of his own people.

God the Father of Israel

In the Old Testament God is not only likened to a father in his pity, love, care, and chastening (Ps. 103:13; Prov. 3:12; Deut. 1:31; 8:5), but is frequently spoken of as the father of the nation Israel. He loves the nation (Exod. 4:22, 23; Deut. 10:15; Jer. 31:9; Hos. 11:1), he made special choice of it and has given it particular attention, caring for all its needs and leading it all along the way it has come. (Deut. 14:1, 2; 32:6; Isa. 1:2; Jer. 3:4, 19; 31:9, 20.) He has redeemed the nation and given it a life and a career with special privileges and blessings. (Isa. 63:16; 64:8; Hos. 11:1.) The Gospels furnish us ample evidence that this idea prevailed in the time of Jesus. (Matt. 2:6; 8:10; 10:6; 15:31; 19:28; Mark 12:29; Luke 1:17, 68, 77; 2:25, 32, 34; 7:9, 16; 22:30; 24:21; John 1:31, 49; 12:13.)

God and the Davidic King

But there is a second and not less significant usage of the term father as applied to God in the Old Testament. In 2 Samuel 7:13-15 it is said that God will establish one of the line of David upon the throne of Israel, and will be to him a father, and the king shall be to God a son. In 1 Chronicles 17:12-14 and 28:5-7 the same idea is expressed, and the word is explicitly referred to Solomon, the son and successor of David. As the life of the nation developed the hopes of the people came more and more to

be centered in the king of the Davidic house in whom and through whom God would bring to fulfilment all of his promises to Israel. He would be the Messiah—the Specially Anointed—of God to redeem and establish the nation. Psalm 89:20-37, especially 26, 27, runs parallel to the two passages just indicated, and says in addition that the king shall be "the firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth." As king and firstborn this king is the object of the special interest and affection of God—a thought which is set forth also in Psalm 2:7-9.

God and the Individual

The conception of God as the father of individuals in general is not stated in the Old Testament. It is rather implied in such passages as Psalm 103:13; Proverbs 3:12; Malachi 2:10, but is nowhere definitely expressed. The life of the individual is prevailingly thought of in connection with the life of the nation, and it is God's relation to the latter that is most in evidence. In the Apocryphal books of the Old Testament, which were written in the period immediately preceding the New Testament time, we have an advance over the books of the Old Testament itself. The books of Wisdom (2:16; 13:3; 18:13), of Sirach (4:9, 10; 23:1, 4), and of Tobit (13:4-6, 18; cf. 8:5-17) give clear expression to the idea of God as the father of the individual with special emphasis upon his fatherly relation to the righteous. From John 8:41 we learn that the conception was in existence among the Jews in Jesus' day, and the relation apparently is not thought of as confined to the Jews that were specially characterized as righteous. It is evident that the conception was not the most constant or controlling in the thinking of the Jews,

but it is equally evident that it was not unknown. It is worth our while to notice that Jesus nowhere seems to feel it necessary to give any explanation or defense of his use of the term. He uses it as if taking it for granted that he will be well understood by his hearers. He emphasizes certain characteristics of God in his capacity as Father, and assumes the acceptance and understanding of the general conception. The fact that he does thus assume rather than expound the idea is a striking testimony also to the central place it held in his own life and thought. It was fundamental.

My Father

In the previous chapter the fact was emphasized that the teaching of Jesus is the unfolding of his own experience, and in no part of his teaching is that more significantly true than here. The use of the term Father to designate God in his relation to Jesus is more frequent than any other in the Gospels. It is found in Mark twice, in Luke eleven times, in Matthew twenty-three times, and in John one hundred eighteen times. Of this total of one hundred fifty-four occurrences, more than one hundred are in the words of Jesus himself. It is noteworthy that Jesus nearly always uses the term Father when speaking to God or of God in his own personal life. Every statement that he makes exalts God, and at the same time he refers to him in the most intimate personal way. He reflects the whole range of feeling from the most devout reverence to the most intimate personal relation and fellowship. He exalts God beyond all comparison and at the same time asserts such intimacy with him as that any one who really perceived his own inner self and spirit was looking upon the

very life and Spirit of the Father. In his daily life and spirit he embodies and manifests the very Father whom he would make real and living to others. Indeed, they two are one. (John 10:30; cf. 5:18; 10:33; 14:6, 10, 13; 17:21-23.)

Your Father

It has been observed frequently that in the teaching in which Jesus speaks of God as the Father of men he is addressing himself to his own disciples. So far as the Gospels furnish us any evidence the usage is not found in teaching addressed to the Jewish public. The expression "your Father" is found in the Gospels about 25 times. Two of these occurrences are in Mark, five are in Luke, and eighteen are in Matthew. Of the 18 found in Matthew, 14 are in the Sermon on the Mount. The expression does not occur in the Gospel of John at all. In every passage in which the expression is found it is used either explicitly or implicitly to indicate the relation of God to the disciples of Jesus. The teaching is not elaborate but clear. God the Father is exalted in heaven (Matt. 5:16, 48; 6:1, 9, 11, 14, 15, 26, 32; 7:11; 23:9; Luke 12:32; 13:43), is holy and worthy of all reverence (Matt. 6:9; Luke 11:2); he knows all our needs before we make them known to him, and is more ready to give his good gifts to us than are our earthly parents. (Matt. 6:8, 32; 7:11; Luke 11:13; 12:30.) He has a forgiving spirit toward all who sin against him, and he requires that all those who claim to be his children shall have the same spirit. (Matt. 6:14, 15; Mark 11:25, 26; Luke 7:42; cf. Matt. 9:13; 12:7; 18:18-35; Luke 15:11-32.) It may be a matter of some surprise that Jesus has not said more

upon this particular matter. The passages cited by no means exhaust the list of blessings which Jesus teaches we may expect God, our Father, to give to us. But these do reflect the qualities which he explicitly emphasizes in that Fatherhood. This fact only makes more impressive the truth to which we have already called attention; namely, that Jesus assumes the conception of God as Father rather than expounds it. He takes it for granted that the central thought will be easily understood.

The Universal Father

It has been widely debated whether Jesus teaches the universal fatherhood of God. Much of this debate has proceeded without definition of terms, and much of the bitterness which has attended the discussion has been due to a lack of common understanding of the point under debate. We have already observed that as a simple matter of fact Jesus explicitly uses the term Father to describe the relation of God either to Jesus himself or to his disciples. This appears to be true even in Matthew 23: 1-9. In any case, the term can, of course, be used of God only in a figurative sense. It is not used in the teaching of Jesus anywhere in the sense in which it is employed in our ordinary speech—that one owes his nature or existence to a creative act of God. It is rather used to indicate an attitude, a spirit which characterizes God. If by the Fatherhood of God is meant his kindness and love, his interest in all men, his desire to help them and bless them, there can be no uncertainty concerning the teaching of Jesus on this point. The "little gospel" in John 3: 16 is fully supported by the gospel teaching at every point and is too clear and emphatic to be misunderstood. The

parables in Luke 15 are given to set forth the amazing and deathless love of God—a love which goes forth to all and is not dependent upon their love for him. But between God and those who respond to his love and grace there is a relation which does not exist between him and those who do not make such response. So far as God himself is involved he would establish with every one such a fellowship as is thought of as the normal relation between a father and a son. If God is not in such fellowship with all it is not due to any attitude on his part, but on the part of those who will not respond to his loving approach. He would be on intimate terms with all; he is on intimate terms with all who will. (Matt. 23:1, 9; 24:36; 28:19; Luke 11:13; 22:29; John 3:35; 4:21, 23; 6:44, 46, 51; Matt. 6:9; Luke 11:1, 2; 15:1, 2, 11-32; cf. Matt. 18:17; Luke 15:7, 10.)

The Supreme Father

The Judaism of Jesus' day prevailingly thought of God as a great King and Lawgiver; his law had been given in very exact and exacting form and must be kept in detail. He was holy and exalted, high and far removed from men. It was quite out of keeping with the proper spirit of reverence due him even to speak his name. With Jesus God is primarily a Father whose heart goes out to all, and with whom it is our privilege to live in familiar, loving fellowship. This must not be understood to mean that Jesus thought of him as any less exalted or supreme. His throne is over all, and his will is supreme. (Matt. 5:34, 35; 23:22; Mark 7:7, 8.) Indeed, Jesus does not usually correlate with his idea of God as Father terms which describe a family status. It is God the Father who will

give us the kingdom (Matt. 13:43; Luke 12:32), and his supremacy and authority are to be unreservedly recognized. Yet the spirit which God has in all these relations is the spirit of a father. It is this father idea that controls all that Jesus would have us think concerning God. He is supreme, but his power goes out with his love and not apart from it or against it. It is his very nature to have the father attitude.

Questions and Problems for Further Discussion

1. What conceptions of God prevailed among the Jews in the time of Jesus?

2. Jesus' controlling thought of God was in terms of his Fatherhood. What did the conception mean? Is he the Father of all men alike? If not, what is the difference?

3. Study the relation between the idea of God as Father and as King.

4. What is the difference between God's Fatherhood in relation to Jesus and to others?

5. Consider carefully the question of the relation of the Fatherhood of God to penalty and punishment of sin.

6. What was new in the teaching of Jesus?

VII

THE PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIAN LIVING

Jesus the Standard

In the last two chapters we have been emphasizing the fact that the teaching of Jesus was the unfolding of his own experience, the overflow of his own inner life. This truth may be put in a different form and with a slightly different emphasis by saying that the life of Jesus is the standard of ours and his character the type of ours. Men have spent much time and used many words in trying to estimate the significance of Jesus in terms of his humanity, and they have found themselves in much perplexity in trying to solve the problem. We have never been quite so ready to recognize that Jesus measures our lives in terms of his own. He demands that those who would be his disciples be governed in thought and purpose by the same principles as were characteristic of his own spirit. (Matt. 10:38; 16:24; Mark 8:34; 10:43-45; Luke 9:23; 14:27.) Indeed, he declares that the ultimate standard by which our character is to be tested and our conduct judged is the perfection of the heavenly Father himself. (Matt. 5:48; Luke 6:36.) Of course, this is the last and highest principle that could be given, but Jesus could have given no lower standard than this without stopping short of the final truth. If he had said less then he would some time be superseded. This great and impressive truth is not only clearly expressed in the teaching of Jesus, but is also recognized in the writings of the two most sig-

nificant thinkers and teachers in the apostolic church, Paul and John. (2 Cor. 3:18; Rom. 8:29, 30; 1 John 3:2, 3.) Any one who has thought of Christian discipleship as a light or easy thing, must receive something of a shock to realize that it involves nothing less than an effort to express in the world the very spirit and life of Jesus himself.

The Inner Spirit

It is not difficult to see that the truth we have just been emphasizing implies that in the teaching of Jesus we are not dealing with a new set of laws and statutes by which we are to live, but with an inner spirit and quality of life. It is a matter of life not law, of spirit not statute. By the time the second Christian century had fairly begun the conception of Christianity as a "new law," a kind of refined Pharisaism, was in evidence. Jesus teaches that the righteousness of his disciples must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees or they cannot enter the kingdom of God (Matt. 5:20), and it is very evident that this superiority in righteousness is to be achieved, not by a greater or more scrupulous fidelity to the law, but by a new kind of righteousness—that of purpose and motive. It is true, to be sure, that Jesus tells us that he came not to destroy the Law and the Prophets but to fulfil, and that not the least part of the law shall pass away until all be fulfilled; but it is equally true and quite as evident that he goes behind the letter to the spirit, from the overt act to the motive and desire of the heart behind the act. (Matt. 5:17-20, 21-48; 7:12; 22:40; 23:25, 26; Luke 16:15-17; 11:39-41.) He paid tribute to those who sat in Moses' seat and said that the things of the law should be

observed by the Jewish religious leaders, but that the weightier matters were judgment and mercy and faith. (Matt. 23:2, 3, 23; Luke 11:42.) Jesus did not disregard the law in that he was indifferent to the will it expressed or the aims it cherished; but he went deeper than the statute to the ideal which it was intended to conserve and realize. If he had been interested in a more careful and exact fulfilment of details, he would have embodied his teaching in a set of statutes in which his mind would have been rigidly expressed. But he never wrote anything. He transmitted what he had to say by means of living, vital, personal contact. The requirements of conduct which Jesus set forth are more vital and simple, and at the same time more difficult and exacting, than the mere letter of the law even though that be kept with meticulous accuracy. Jesus denounced those who made the law something formal, and by their shrewd evasions of its real intent while giving scrupulous obedience to the letter, made of its observance a hollow mockery. (Matt. 15:1-9; Mark 7:1-13.) The words which he spoke were spirit and life, and it was the spirit which was vital. (John 6:63; Matt. 6:4, 6, 18.)

Sincerity of Purpose

The emphasis of Jesus upon the inner spirit carries with it, of course, the demand for utter sincerity on the part of all those who would be his disciples. Jesus' arraignment of the religious leaders of his own day who were scrupulous in the observance of external details but quite indifferent in their hearts, is seen in a number of passages, the most notable of which is in Matthew 23:13-30. (Cf. also Matt. 6:2, 5, 16; 15:7; Mark 7:6; 12:38, 39-44;

Luke 11:39-52; 12:56; 13:15; 20:46.) It would be difficult to conceive a more impressive or terrible group of charges that could be lodged against those who lay any claim at all to religious interest and moral decency. We need to remember that Jesus was speaking to the strictest religious group of his nation, to those who gave most careful attention to all the details of the law of Moses. It is against these leaders that he hurls these fearful charges—such charges as still make the pulse of the reader beat faster, and have caused the name hypocrite even to this day to be regarded as the most damning of indictments. Jesus had hope for the publicans and the harlots, the outcasts of his people (Matt. 21:31); but for those who made of religion a form of respectability which left the inner springs of their life untouched he had only words of despair and woe. To his disciples he spoke special words of warning against them and their spirit. (Matt. 16:6, 11, 12; Mark 8:11-21; Luke 12:1.) It was they who were in danger of committing that sin against the Holy Spirit which has no forgiveness. (Matt. 12:31; Mark 3:29; Luke 12:10.) It is our disposition to minimize the sins of temper and inner attitude, and to regard those who sin in the flesh as almost if not wholly outside the possibility of hope for forgiveness and renewal. Jesus reversed these judgments and despaired of those who were meticulous in keeping the details of the law, and whose spirit was at the same time hard and self-complacent. It is for these that he reserves his severest words, and against them that he hurls his most terrible denunciations. No one must presume upon these declarations of the Master and think it right or Christian to condone sin; but we should not forget that Jesus has so clearly and

powerfully expressed his judgment upon these things. We are apt to reverse the order. We forsake the mind of Christ when we do.

The Fountain of Conduct

This insistence of Jesus upon the inner springs of life must not be understood to mean that he was not interested in the outward forms of conduct. There have been those who have divorced the inner and the outer phases of life, and declared that it matters little what we do if only we have faith and a right attitude of heart. Such teachers get no comfort from Jesus. He is very critical of any who insist upon outward conformity and lack the proper spirit, but he is just as emphatic in his attitude toward those who make loud profession and do not support such profession by their deeds. "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things I say?" (Luke 6:46.) "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 7:21, 22-27; Luke 6:46-49). "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments" (John 14:21, 23). "My brother is he who has the word of God and does it" (Matt. 12:50; Mark 3:35; Luke 8:21). It is conduct as the outflow of the heart upon which he lays stress. Not only is conduct the expression of the heart, but the character is known and determined by the conduct just as a tree is known by its fruit. It is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaketh, and from the bitter fountain only bitter water may be expected to flow; it is from the good fountain only that good water flows. (Matt. 7:16-20; 12:33-35; 15:18-20; Mark 7:18-23; Luke 6:43-45.)

The First Commandment

But what, we ask Jesus, is it that must be in the heart as the most central and potent factor of the inner life; what is the essence of that inner attitude that is so imperative, so fundamental? The inquiry is easy to answer for Jesus once made reply to precisely this question. "What commandment is first of all?" was the problem which the scribe presented. Translated into more modern phraseology it is really the question as to what is most fundamental and basic in the requirements laid upon us that we may meet the demands of God and satisfy his will for us. Jesus answers in plain and explicit words, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength" (Matt. 22:36-38; Mark 12:28-30; cf. Luke 10:25-28). The love which is here enjoined is related to the entire range of the inner life and all the powers of the spiritual nature of man. The very base of all living which is acceptable to God is an attitude in which he is given the devotion of the entire self, and the supreme place in all thought and purpose and affection. The reference in Luke indicates that the words given by Matthew and Mark as those of Jesus were given at another time by a certain lawyer, and it would appear that such a conception was held among the Jews before it was explicitly set forth in the teaching of Jesus. The words are quoted from Deuteronomy (6:5; cf. 10:18, 19) with a slight variation in wording, as they agree neither with the Hebrew nor the Greek translation which was current in the time of Jesus. But in any case Jesus makes this commandment central and unique, and strips from it all secondary or auxiliary

considerations. It is interesting to observe, and it may be thought strange, that although Jesus makes this commandment so basic, he nowhere else speaks of it, nor does he give on any occasion any exposition of it. The explanation is to be found in the fact that it is implicit in all that he says and is involved in his teaching in many ways and forms.

Trust the Father

Along with this indication of love as the primary factor in a right relation with God must be placed another as the necessary complement of this, and one which receives repeated emphasis in the teaching of Jesus: faith in God as our Father and trust in his fatherly care. God's interest in us is so great and his readiness to do for us so far beyond our thinking and asking, that we may trust him simply and fully to do for us all needed things. (Matt. 6:25-33; 7:7-11; Luke 11:9-13; 12:22-31.) He is much more ready to do for us than are our earthly parents. We may trust him for bodily safety, for food and drink and all material blessings. (Mark 4:37-40; Matt. 8:26; Luke 8:25.) We should especially remember that it is his good pleasure to give us the kingdom and all the blessings that belong with it and there is nothing that is good that we may not expect if we trust God. (Matt. 9:22; 17:20; 21:21, 22; Mark 9:23; cf. 5:34; 10:52; 11:22, 23; Luke 9:41; 17:6; cf. 7:50; 8:48; 18:42.) The one condition on which we may expect God to provide for all our needs is to commit ourselves wholly to him, and place the interests of his kingdom first in our lives (Matt. 6:34; Luke 12:31), and then believe absolutely in him and his willingness to give us his good gifts. (Matt. 21:

22; Mark 11:23, 24.) It is impossible to be acceptable to God by trying to give him a part of ourselves, or to recognize his claims in part. We must make choice between him and all else. We must determine that to him we will give ourselves completely and without reserve, and then let all other things take their rightful and proportionate place. No man can serve two masters. We must have one Master, and one only, and that one must be God. We must love him with all the powers of our being, and trust him with all the strength of our soul. (Matt. 6:34; Luke 16:13.)

Count the Cost

Jesus makes no attempt to ignore the fact that the attitude toward God and his kingdom which he urges is a costly one. Nothing in his teaching is more striking, and nothing has seemed more difficult to appreciate, than certain of his sayings in which these imperative and exclusive claims are set before his disciples. He would have no one enter upon the way without counting the cost and considering well all that is involved. (Luke 14:28-33.) If it becomes necessary to make choice between Jesus and the kingdom of God on the one side, and the most intimate and sacred human relationships on the other, there must be no hesitancy in the decision. Until one is willing to make such a decision and renounce all that he has he cannot be a true disciple. (Matt. 10:34-37; Luke 14:26, 33.) The rigorous demand for this exacting decision is not due to any indifference on the part of Jesus to the claims of natural affection. There is clear and ample evidence in the Gospels that he would have us recognize and cherish all such relationships, and some of his severest

censure fell upon those who sought to evade such claims in the name of their devotion to God. (Matt. 15:3-6; Mark 7:9-13.) Jesus merely recognizes that the natural outcome of the presence of his kingdom and truth among men will be the creation of differences of interest and attitude, and that in such cases nothing, not even those claims which seem most natural and compelling, must be allowed to interfere with our acceptance of his truth and our devotion to his kingdom. The claims of the kingdom of God are paramount and must take precedence over all other claims in life. (Matt. 10:34-37; Luke 12:51-53.)

His Cross and Ours

When Jesus first made announcement to his disciples of his approaching death they, as we have already seen, rejected the idea flatly. Peter, the spokesman, in the shock of his surprise, began a warm denial of the fact Jesus had stated. But Jesus rebuked him very sternly and reaffirmed the fact and its necessity as the culmination of his own life and ministry. He followed this with the assertion that any one who would really become his disciple must enter upon the same way; he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow Jesus. This does not mean the denial of something to oneself, even if that something be greatly desired. It means the displacement of oneself, one's interests and concerns from the central and the controlling place in life, and the adoption of the kingdom of God as one's chief interest and of Jesus as the supreme guide in one's life. It means the repudiation of the self-centered and self-controlled life and the acceptance of the kingdom-centered and the God-controlled life. The cross is not a burden, but an instrument of death. To bear the

cross daily and to follow Jesus means the crucifixion of the self and all the ambitions and interests that center in it, and the living of life under the dominance and guidance of the same spirit and purpose as were present in the life and ministry of Jesus. We are merely to make vital and real in our lives that which was the controlling motive in his. Jesus announces the principle of his own life and proclaims it the law of ours. (Matt. 10:38; 16:24; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23; 14:27.)

Losing Life and Finding It

It is a striking fact that Jesus conceived this not as a way of death but of life. The paradox in which he sets forth this truth has often been interpreted in a very superficial way. Jesus has been made to say that whoever would sacrifice his life here in this world for the sake of the gospel would find as compensation for such sacrifice eternal life in the world to come. It is worth observing that Jesus announces a principle which he regards as fundamental in the life both of himself and his disciples. It is the law of his kingdom, as true for him as for us, as true for us as for him. It is also of value for us to see that he declares it not as legislation but as revelation. It was true before he said it and would have been true and have continued to be true if he had not said it. He means to tell us that whoever follows him in the living of life and the devotion of powers, not to self-centered and self-seeking activity, but to the higher aims of the gospel, shall find himself entering into an experience which is richer and more abundant now, and possesses more permanent meaning and satisfaction than would be found in the other. He who so lives may seem to be losing, but he

is saving. His life is not poorer but richer, it is not less but more satisfying; it is not less but more divine. It is this life, and this only that abides unto life eternal. Here again the truth announced is the truth which was vital in his own experience. It is to become vital in ours. (Matt. 10:39; 16:25; Mark 8:35-37; Luke 9:24, 25; 17:33, 34; John 12:25; cf. Mark 9:33-50.)

The Second Commandment

The lawyer who asked Jesus concerning the first and great commandment gave no intimation that he expected or desired any reply beyond the answer to this specific question. But Jesus' thought was evidently not complete with the statement of this truth, and he goes on to add something that he considers very important. He says there is a second commandment like unto the first—"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Mark 12:31). This commandment is found in the Old Testament (Lev. 19:18), but not in conjunction with the first one. It is not without significance that Jesus should have brought these two isolated fragments of the law together into one statement. It is also worth noticing that the immediate context in Leviticus definitely indicates that the neighbor is there thought of as one of the Hebrew race, though in 19:34 there seems to be a wider application. It is the narrower view which Jesus implies was common among the Jews, and which he specifically criticizes and corrects in the Sermon on the Mount. (Matt. 5:43-48.) In his reply to the lawyer Jesus very emphatically puts with the supreme injunction to love God with all the power and strength of one's being a second one of similar import—the love of one's neighbor as oneself. These two com-

mands taken together sum up the whole law (Matt. 22: 40), and on these two hang all the law and the prophets. He who decries the social applications of the gospel that he may preserve the gospel in its purity simply repudiates the plain statement of Jesus. Paul speaks the mind and message of his Lord when he writes that "the whole law is fulfilled in one word, even this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Gal. 5:14; cf. Gal. 6:2; Matt. 7:12). Jesus himself makes the proper attitude toward one's fellows antecedent to any acceptable worship of God. (Matt. 5:23, 24.) In the writings of John we have a number of passages in which love of one another is set forth as the new commandment which Jesus gave. (John 13:34, 35; 15:12, 17; 1 John 3:11, 23; 4:21; 2 John 5.) Whatever may be the explanation of the reason for it, the fact is perfectly clear that Jesus gives a great deal of attention to the development of the truth of the second commandment and the setting forth of the duties which are implied in it. It is also amply evident that he thinks of the application of the term neighbor in the widest possible way. He enjoins that we love even our enemies and do good unto all, even to those who use us meanly. It is only in this way that we may become true sons of our Father in heaven. If we stop short of it we are no better than pagans, we have no right to lay claim to the name Christian. (Matt. 5:43-48; Luke 16:27, 28, 32, 33.)

The Golden Rule

The practical equivalent of this second commandment is found, according to Jesus' own words, in his utterance usually referred to as the Golden Rule. (Matt. 7:12; Luke 6: 31.) The idea contained in these words is not wholly new

in the teaching of Jesus. It is found in Jewish literature (Tobit 4:15; second cent. B. C.) and Jewish tradition ascribes it to Hillel, one of the most celebrated of Jewish teachers in the time immediately preceding the ministry of Jesus. It was also known among the Chinese, the Greeks, and the Stoics, but always in the negative form. It is found a number of times in the Christian literature of the earliest Christian centuries, and in every case which is not quoting Jesus directly it is in the negative form. In the teaching of Jesus negative ideas are not prominent, and he states this conception in the positive form and in this was really different. He calls for the active expression in conduct, at all times and in all things, of that love which is the burden of the second commandment. This is the rule of conduct which is expressive of the inner attitude there enjoined. These two pregnant sayings of Jesus are not based upon the assumption that we are insignificant and unworthy of any estimate of value. They are rather based upon the presupposition of the supreme value in the world of every individual and the consequent necessity which is upon us to treat every one in accordance with the regard due him. "Reverence for personality" is the all-inclusive moral obligation, for personality is the supreme human value.

Servant of All

"I am among you as one that serveth," said Jesus (Luke 22:27), and in these words stated the rule of his life. He gives the principle notable illustration in connection with the last supper with his disciples when he took the basin of water and the towel, and washed the disciples' feet—a service which apparently they had been unwilling

to perform for each other. (John 13:4-17; cf. Luke 22:24.) While Jesus performs this act which is considered so menial, he explicitly states that in so doing he has given an example which his disciples are expected to follow. (John 13:15.) It is the spirit of service which he here exemplifies for which he is primarily concerned, and he repeatedly affirms and emphasizes it in his relations with his disciples. Apparently it was a lesson which was very difficult for them to learn. (Matt. 18:1, 3, 4; Mark 9:33-35; Luke 9:46-48; Matt. 20:21, 22; Mark 10:35-38; Luke 22:24-26; Matt. 23:11; Luke 14:11; 18:14.) Jesus asserts that it is the fundamental law of living in his kingdom in contrast with that which is prevalent among the nations (Matt. 20:25-27; Mark 10:42-45; Luke 22:25, 27), and reenforces its obligation for his followers by an appeal to the example of his own life. It is the standard by which rank in his kingdom is determined. Greatness begins where service begins, and he is greatest who is most truly and deeply the servant of all. In a very impressive passage (Matt. 25 : 31-45), this is announced as the basis of final judgment. It is here plainly said that service rendered to the least of his brethren is service rendered to him and his kingdom. Failure to recognize the human need and perform the service will be sufficient reason for the exclusion of such an one from the blessings of the kingdom. It is, of course, not a question of the size or the quantity of the service, as the story of the widow's mite makes abundantly clear. (Mark 12:41-44; Luke 21:1-4.) It is a matter of the inner spirit of service coming to vital and active expression in the conduct. The Son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, even to the giving of his life for men (Matt. 20:

28; Mark 10:45; Luke 22:27; John 15:15), and in so doing he has promulgated and exemplified the law of his kingdom. He is king in a kingdom of service, and all those who would become citizens of that kingdom must share in the spirit of the king. (Cf. Rom. 8:9.) He who would exalt himself by making aggressive claims to position in the kingdom shall be abased; but he who shares in the spirit of his Master in his humility shall share with him also in the glory and the dignity of his kingdom. (Matt. 23:12; Luke 14:11; 18:14; Matt. 20:22, 23; Mark 10:38-40; Matt. 19:28; Luke 22:29, 30.)

Religion and Life

Jesus connects vitally religion and ethics as two sides of the same thing. Those who would divorce the two are cutting themselves off from the very spirit of the Master and, if sincere, cannot realize what manner of thing they are doing. The best evidence of a right attitude toward God is a right attitude and conduct toward men. He who is unbrotherly and indifferent to the needs of his brother man, may be able to make long prayers and may occupy prominent place in ecclesiastical circles, but he is unchristlike and unchristian. His protestations of devotion to God and his kingdom avail nothing, and God will reject him and appoint him his portion with those who are outside. For "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen" (1 John 4:20).

In seeking to apply these two fundamental principles—the first and the second commandments—of Jesus to our modern living there are three problems that are rated by competent judges as of first importance. They are the

family, wealth, and world relations. We must give ourselves to a brief study of the mind of Jesus upon these questions.

Questions and Problems for Further Discussion

1. Consider Jesus' summary of the law of God and the duty of man, and show how this is sufficient to meet all demands.

2. What does Jesus regard as the worst of sins? Why?

3. What is the relation of the first and second commandments as summed up by Jesus?

4. Explain how Jesus can claim such an exclusive place in our heart and life.

5. What does Jesus mean by "bearing our cross"? "denying self"?

6. Make a careful statement of the meaning of the expression, "finding life and losing it." Does Jesus' statement that one who would be great must be a servant, apply to him or to his followers only? Explain the principle involved in your answer.

VIII

THE PRACTISE OF CHRISTIAN LIVING—THE FAMILY

Importance of the Family

The family is the primary social unit. It is not only the earliest form of social relationship into which the child is born, but it is also—at least it should be—the most intimate. One of our leading sociologists of the present day, Professor Ellwood, has written, in one of his best known books:[1] "The indispensable preliminary to a Christian society is a Christian family life. If men cannot be socialized and Christianized in these more intimate relations, it is idle to think they can in the larger and more complex relations." These are very impressive words from one of our most competent judges. They emphasize a most important truth, and all those who are interested in the future of our life and civilization are challenged to give the matter careful and serious consideration. What is the Christian ideal of the home, and what is the teaching of Jesus upon this vital subject?

The Home of Jesus

We have only meager information about the home in which Jesus grew up, for that was not a matter of much interest to the Gospel writers. He was the firstborn of Mary (Luke 2:7), but he had at least four brothers whose names are given us (Matt. 13:55, 56; Mark 6:3), and as

[1] *Reconstruction of Religion*, p. 209.

many as three, possibly more, sisters (Matt. 13:56; note the plural and the use of the word *all*), all of whom were alive during his public ministry. (Matt. 12:46, 47; Mark 3:21, 31, 32; Luke 8:9, 20; John 2:12; 7:3, 5, 10.) Some of them survived him and are known to us in the later history of the church. (Acts 1:14; 1 Cor. 9:5; cf. Gal. 1:19.) The sisters seem to have been living in Nazareth probably with their own families (Matt. 13:56; Mark 6:3), and the other members of the family in Capernaum. (John 2:12; Matt. 4:13-16; Mark 2:1; Matt. 9:1.) It has been thought that Joseph had died before the ministry began but that is uncertain. (Luke 2: 41, 51; 4:22; John 6:42.) It would seem that he was not living at the time of the crucifixion, otherwise Jesus' mother, Mary, would hardly have gone to the home of the disciple to live. (John 19:25-27.) The home of Jesus was that of a poor (Luke 2:24; cf. Lev. 12:8) but honest workman (Matt. 1:19; 13:55), and Jesus followed the trade of Joseph as a job carpenter. (Mark 6:3.) Naturally there was a circle of kinsmen (Luke 1:58; 2:44), but how large it was we do not know. There is some suggestion that Mary, the mother, had a sister, Salome (John 19:25; Mark 15:40; Matt. 27:56) who was the wife of the well-to-do fisherman, Zebedee, and the mother of James and John who became leaders among the apostles. (Matt. 4:21, 22; Mark 1:19, 20; Luke 5:10.) Some of the kinsmen belonged to the priestly group of the nation, among them Elizabeth, the wife of Zacharias and the mother of John the Baptist. (Luke 1:36.) It thus appears that the family in which Jesus grew up was one of varied interests. It knew the meaning of honest toil and of high thinking, of the richness of human fellowship and the in-

spiration of religious ideals. Jesus had all the discipline of such a home (Luke 2:51), in which, probably, he had a special responsibility. His teaching here as in other things is the expression of his own experience and observation.

Jesus' Attitude Toward the Home

So far as we have any evidence of any kind whatsoever Jesus never married, and this fact, taken with certain statements made by him, has led some students and religious leaders to believe that Jesus discounted the home and family life and placed a premium upon celibacy. To be sure he seems to have had no home except that in which he was born and grew to manhood (Matt. 8:20; Luke 9:58), and one saying of his (Matt. 19:12), appears at first blush to indicate the higher rank of the celibate life. But what he is really saying is that there are occasions when the demands of the kingdom may challenge one to refrain from the blessings and responsibilities of married life that he may do his duty in kingdom service. Jesus also considered the possibility of a division in family circles because of diverse attitude toward him (Matt. 10:34-36; Luke 12:51-53; cf. Mark 3:32; Matt. 24:21; Luke 21:16), and he did not hesitate to say that under such conditions his claims must be given first place. (Matt. 19:29; Mark 10:29; Luke 18:29.) For most of us such teaching may seem to lack pertinence and may be difficult to appreciate. But in Jesus' day, and in many places today, the teaching was pertinent and important. It is sometimes said that Jesus rather abruptly repudiated his family connections and declared them without any meaning to him. (Matt. 12:48, 49; Mark 3:31-34; Luke 8:19-21.) It is apparent that his family did not understand him and

were not in full sympathy with his public work, and Jesus is simply asserting that the work of the kingdom is paramount for him, and those who share in his purpose and ideals have a primary significance with him. (Matt. 12:48; Mark 3:21, 31; Luke 8:19; John 7:3, 5.) The attitude of the family seems to have changed later, and after his resurrection they are found with his disciples. (Acts 1:14; cf. Matt. 28:10; John 20:17; 1 Cor. 15:7.) His word to his mother at the marriage in Cana (John 2:4) has often given perplexity because it has seemed curt and sharp. But a comparison of this passage with others in which the same form of address is used gives a different and more accurate impression of its spirit. (John 8:10; 19:26; 20:13, 15; Luke 13:12.)

Marriage

The family and the home have their basis in marriage. The teaching of Jesus on this particular point is not very extensive, but it is very clear. It is given in connection with his answer to a question about divorce which was brought to him by certain Pharisees that they might test him out. (Matt. 19:3-9; Mark 10:2-12.) It is clear from the reply of Jesus that he looks upon marriage as a divine institution in accordance with the conceptions set forth in Genesis (Gen. 1:27; 2:24); that he believes it to be based upon the fundamental nature of man and woman as male and female; that it is the union of one man and one woman; in its normal character it is a union that is permanent and is not to be dissolved; and it is the most fundamental and intimate of all human relationships. When the Sadducees came during the last week of his ministry with their question about the woman who was

married to seven brothers in succession (Matt. 22:23-28; Mark 12:18-23; Luke 20:27-33), Jesus announced another significant truth about marriage—it is related only to our life in this world and has no meaning in the life of the world to come. (Matt. 22:30; Mark 12:25; Luke 20:34-36.) This is to say that it is a fundamental biological and racial relationship, based upon the sex distinction of man and woman, and is related to the perpetuation of the race. In the world to come there will be no such relation because there will be no basis for it in the fundamental nature of man. This, however, must not be perverted into a statement that marriage is a purely physical union. The flippant woman who held conversation with Jesus at the well of Sychar gave occasion for the enunciation of still another important truth bearing on this point. (John 4:16-18.) Marriage has a moral and spiritual quality in it and is based upon the love and fidelity of those who are married. This woman was not truly married. She was living in the intimacies of wedded life with a man who was the fifth with whom she had sustained such relations. But he was not her husband, and she was not truly married, because the personal affection and moral quality which justified it were wanting. Marriage is a spiritual relationship, sanctified in such a basis, by nature permanent, and carrying with it sacred obligation.

Divorce

The discussion of marriage is involved in the answer to the specific question of certain Pharisees whether it is lawful for a man to divorce his wife. This was a matter much debated among Jewish teachers, and there were two sharply divided opinions. The stricter school held that

divorce was permissible upon the ground of adultery or some other serious moral fault. The other and more liberal school held that it was permissible upon almost any ground that might seem sufficient to the man who desired to put away his wife. It was even said by some that the finding of some other woman more attractive than his wife was enough to constitute valid grounds for divorce. The Pharisees bring the question to Jesus with the statement (which was correct) that Moses permitted divorcement, enjoining only that the man should write a bill of divorcement for the wife whom he was putting away. (Deut. 24:13.) The first part of Jesus' answer is that Moses was really yielding something to the wickedness of the heart in making such a provision, and that it was not by any means in accordance with the ideal. God had originally created male and female and joined them into one flesh as man and wife. It was the divine intention that this union should be permanent. Neither husband nor wife should divorce the other and marry some one else. To do so is to be guilty of unfaithfulness to the original marriage vow. It is not a dissolution of the marriage, it is adultery; it is infidelity under a marriage vow and a relation that still exists. It is not explicitly said that the purpose of divorcement is the remarrying to another, but it is rather clearly implied; the thought lies close at hand that it is not love but lust that actuates such conduct. The teaching of Jesus in this passage (Matt. 19:3-12; Mark 10:2-12), is affirmed in several others (Matt. 5:31, 32; Luke 16:18), and it is all very clear and emphatic: Marriage in the divine intention is permanent, divorce is unwarranted, and remarriage of a divorced person constitutes adultery. To be sure, in two phrases, Matthew

(Matt. 5:32; 19:9) seems to indicate that Jesus made an exception to the principle of no divorce in the case of one who is guilty of fornication. There is no space for a discussion of all the points involved in this difference between Matthew and the other Gospels. But the particular exception which is mentioned by Matthew is itself of the very nature of the offense declared to be involved in remarriage, and the spiritual integrity of marriage is implied in this statement of exception as clearly as in the main statement. Jesus is announcing a principle and is not entering upon a discussion of all details, or attempting to legislate for specific cases. He maintains the basic spiritual unity and integrity of the marriage relation and disapproves all conduct that would violate it. This interpretation of Jesus is supported by Paul in one of the very rare references he makes to the teaching of Jesus. (1 Cor. 7:10, 11.) It is evident that he understood Jesus to have taught the permanency of marriage, and that in case of separation there should be no divorce and remarriage. (Cf. also Rom. 7:2, 3.) It is frequently asserted that Jesus does not include in his teaching the innocent and injured party in a broken marriage, but the facts do not support the assertion. Indeed, precisely this phase of the matter seems to be in mind in two passages. (Matt. 5:32; Luke 16:18.) He here says expressly that a marriage with such an one who has been put away is adulterous. In this statement Jesus has extended the idea beyond its scope in the Old Testament (Lev. 18:10; 20:10), and beyond that in the mind of his contemporaries. This is quite in accord with his conception of the fundamental nature of the marriage relation and his deeper reading of its sacredness. The free and easy views so prevalent in our day are a

violation of every conviction of his heart. They are pagan and not Christian.

Adultery

The attitude of Jesus toward various forms of immorality that are related to the sexes must be discerned indirectly, for he nowhere specifically discusses the matter. As we have just seen he gives very clear indication of certain conduct which constitutes adultery and a violation of the marriage estate. Although he makes no statement of the degree of moral fault involved, it is evident from the passages discussed as well as from others in which social immorality is mentioned in more general terms that he regards all forms of it as gross and deplorable. (Mark 7:21; 10:19; Matt. 15:19; 19:18; 21:31, 32; Luke 15:30; 18:20.) It is quite in line with the general character of Jesus' ethics that he should read the sin not in the outward act only but also in the impure look and desire. (Matt. 5:27, 28.) He does not say, as he is sometimes interpreted to say, that the sinful thought is as bad and disastrous as the sinful act. But he does declare that sin is as truly found in the impure desire as it is in the unclean act. Although he read the sin much more deeply than had any of those who preceded him yet his treatment of those sinning was much more sympathetic than was that of either the Old Testament or Judaism. The accusers of the woman whose story is told in John (7:53 to 8:11) say truly that the law provides (Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22-24) that one known to be guilty of such sin shall be stoned to death. However, the Gospel of Matthew implies (Matt. 1:19; 5:32; 19:9), what we are explicitly informed in other sources was true, that the penalty was not always,

probably only very rarely, enforced. It is interesting to observe that the man who was the partner in sin, although known, is disregarded by those who take the woman and is not brought into the story at all. Jesus answers the accusers by saying that they are as guilty as the accused, and they evidently are compelled to acknowledge the truth of his charge. When he and the woman are left alone he sends her away to sin no more. At the feast in the house of Simon (Luke 7:36-50), he thought that if Jesus knew the character of the woman who was ministering to him he would not permit her to touch him. Jesus told Simon that the woman had sinned much, but that she also believed and loved much and therefore had much forgiven. To the woman he said, "Go in peace." He was exacting in dealing with the sin, but he was very sympathetic and understanding in dealing with the sinner. He treated them, as he always did every one, upon the basis of the gospel, and in accordance with the principles of love and forgiveness. He thought it very certain that some of the outcasts of his people would find their way into the kingdom before certain groups of religious leaders. (Matt. 21:31, 32.) He does not condone the sin, but he expects, in love and sympathy, to redeem the sinner.

Parents and Children

Children were regarded as a blessing in a Jewish home (Ps. 113:9; 127:3, 4; Eccl. 6:3; Isa. 54:1; Luke 1:7, 25, 58), and those who had no children felt themselves under reproach. Jesus took for granted the presence of children in the home, and also, for the most part, the affectionate relation between parents and children. He assumes that parents will love their children and give them all

good things possible. He uses this assumed affection and interest to enforce one of his most emphatic lessons concerning the love and care of our heavenly Father. (Matt. 7:9-11; Luke 11:13; 12:53; cf. Matt. 15:26; Mark 7:27.) He also employs the love of a father for his son to bring home to the Jewish leaders the significance of their rejection of him. (Matt. 21:37; Mark 12:6; Luke 20:13.) The Gospels contain a large number of other passages in which there is incidental reference to children with similar implication as to their place and relation in the home. (Matt. 9:18; 10:37; 15:22; Mark 5:34, 35; 7:26, 29; Luke 7:12; 8:42, 49; 9:38-41; 15:11; John 4:47.) Jesus criticizes very severely those who under a show of great devotion to God fail to use their means to minister to the needs of parents. (Matt. 15:3-7; Mark 7:9-13.) The radical and exacting demands of his kingdom he enforces by the suggestion of the extreme possibility that the natural affection of those who belong to the same family may have to be disregarded in order that the claims of the kingdom may be met. (Matt. 10:34-37; 19:19, 29; Mark 10:29; Luke 12:51-53; 14:26; 18:29.) These passages exalt the kingdom as of supreme significance, but they dignify the home relationships as the most adequate in trying to impress the idea. Jesus employs the spirit of children in the home to emphasize the attitude of mind and heart required of those who would find their way into the kingdom. (Matt. 11:25; 19:13-15; Mark 10:13-16; Luke 10:21; 18:15-17.) It is even more significant that he should say that our attitude in receiving or rejecting children expresses our attitude in receiving or rejecting him; he makes the child a representative of himself. (Matt. 18:5; Mark 9:36, 37; Luke 9:48.) Most significant of

all is the fact that he uses the term Father as his most expressive term for God, and in so doing has given the highest known conception of God and at the same time has ennobled and sanctified the whole of family life.

Jesus and Our Home Life

The teaching of Jesus as to home and family is radical. If it were put into operation in our homes today it would solve all our problems. Divorces and divorce courts would disappear, and, of course, the reasons for them would go too. Trial marriage and free love and all the other moral rot and filth would not be known among us. Child neglect and child labor would disappear. Lust and all its train of ills in disease and weakness, in heartache and shame, would be eradicated, and homes of love and joy and peace, of mutual trust and helpfulness, of parents respected and deserving respect, of children loved and cherished and cared for, of sons and daughters bringing pride and joy, would come to abide. We would have homes of health and contentment, of enriching affection and noble living, homes as God would have them. Utopian, is it? Even so; but that is what we would have, and that and only that is the way it will come.

Questions and Problems for Further Discussion

1. Study the home life and relationships of Jesus.

2. Study carefully Jesus' statements about his taking precedence over all family relations, and make an accurate statement of his meaning.

3. What did Jesus regard as the fundamental nature and meaning of marriage?

4. What is Jesus' attitude on the matter of divorce?

5. What are the main problems of home life today?

6. Is the teaching of Jesus sufficient to meet the needs of home life of today? Justify your answer.

IX

THE PRACTISE OF CHRISTIAN LIVING—THE PROBLEM OF WEALTH

Money—the Acid Test

Such is the title of a well-known and widely used book in mission study circles. Whether all would agree that the most searching test of a man is the way he acquires and uses his money, it is generally recognized that the proper valuation and use of wealth is one of the most difficult and important tasks that the modern Christian faces. One of the leading Christian social authorities of our country has said that "the effort to put property in its proper place is the center of the struggle for economic democracy"; and the president of one of our greatest universities is reported to have remarked not long ago that "either property rights must give way to human rights or there will be revolution." In trying to determine our duty and the way whereon we should go, we naturally turn to ask the mind of Jesus upon the problem. It is evident that the problem is an old one, and a perplexing one in his day, for he gives it so much attention. He must have recognized how much need there was and is for his truth and his guidance.

Principles Not Programs

We need to recall that the society in which Jesus lived was much less complex than that in which we live today. All forms of modern mechanical and industrial machinery

were wanting, and the life of Palestine was organized in the comparatively simple forms of a non-industrial and a non-machinery-using people. Jesus himself was a carpenter, perhaps what we would call a job carpenter (Mark 6:3; cf. Matt. 13:55), and some of his closest associates and disciples were fishermen (Matt. 4:18; Mark 1:16-20; cf. Mark 5:37; Luke 8:51; Matt. 17:1; Mark 9:2; Luke 9:28; Matt. 26:37; Mark 14:33); he speaks in terms of the sower of seed, of vineyards, shepherds, fishermen, merchants, of bartering, of borrowing and lending, and other forms of simple social life. It is also quite in line with Jesus' general insistence upon the inner character of all right relations that he should give us principles rather than programs. He summed up the whole of our duty in two commandments which are concerned with the very springs of our inner life. And on one occasion he definitely refused to enter a field of dispute about the disposition of certain property, saying that was not his business. (Luke 12:13-15.)

Personality Not Property

In connection with the episode just mentioned Jesus announces one of the most fundamental of all his statements in this field of human interest—"a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Luke 12:15). The truth here given may be paraphrased in these words: "A man's life does not consist in what he has even when that possession is very great; it consists in what he is. It is the man not the property that is the real value." This truth he enforces with the story of the man who saw all the values of his life in his accumulated possessions. That very night he lost his life and then his property

was worthless to him and passed to another. (Luke 12:16-21.) With this agrees also the emphatic statement that the man himself is worth more than all the material world. (Matt. 16:26; Mark 8:36, 37; Luke 9:25; note especially Luke's words.) If one should gain everything else and lose himself, he has suffered an irreparable loss. He will have nothing which he could exchange for his life if it is once gone. Life only is current coin in that realm. Of like tenor is the statement (Luke 14:33), that any one who does not renounce all that he has cannot be his disciple, and his declaration to the rich young man (Matt. 19:21; Mark 10:21; Luke 18:22) that if he would have life and treasure in heaven he should sell all and give to the poor. (Cf. Luke 12:33.) With this belongs such injunctions as that in the Sermon on the Mount which discounts any treasure on earth and emphasizes concentration upon the search for treasure in heaven. (Matt. 6:19ff.)

Life and Values

It is these and kindred statements that have led one of the greatest of our authorities in the field of ethics (Paulsen) to say that " for the Christian wealth has no value." But a fairer and more careful reading of the Gospels will hardly lead to this conclusion. In connection with the word that we are not to seek for the accumulation of treasure on earth but in heaven, we have the further declaration that if we seek first the kingdom all these things shall be added unto us, for our heavenly Father knows that we have " need of all these things " (Matt. 6:31-33; Luke 12:28-31). They have value but only secondary value. " Life is more than food " (Matt. 6:25; Luke 12:23), and " man cannot live by bread alone," but he cannot live

without bread. (Matt. 4:4; Luke 4:4; 10:38-42.) The widow who cast such an insignificant sum into the treasury (Mark 12:41-44; Luke 21:1-4) really made a large gift for it was all her living, while those who cast in the large sums made small gifts because what they gave was only a part of a surplus which they did not need. These material things have their place in our life, and their value in relation to life. Wherein they are related to life and make a contribution to life, they are valuable, and wherein they are sought for their own sake, or their value is seen in them apart from life, they are not a good but a bad, not wealth but illth (as John Ruskin says). It is after these things that the Gentiles seek; or, to put it another way, he who places the material things first and seeks them above the treasure of the kingdom, is a heathen regardless of the particular country or community in which he lives. The whole value of these things is secondary not primary, auxiliary and not fundamental.

Deceit of Riches

But it is the peculiar characteristic of wealth that it has the tendency to lead men to regard it as the chief good. That which is of value only in relation to life is assigned a value for its own sake. With this always goes a growing desire for wealth—the spirit of covetousness which is idolatry. (Col. 3:5.) Jesus expressly warns against this spirit. (Luke 12:15.) Francis Xavier, the great Catholic missionary, is reported to have said that he had had men confess to him every sin of which he had ever heard or read, and some of which he had never known until they were confessed, but that he had never had any one confess to him the sin of covetousness. This was not because

the sin did not exist, but because men were not aware of it. It steals in so quietly and insidiously that it has possession of the heart ere one knows it. It is this deceitfulness of riches ("delight of riches") that is associated by Jesus with the cares of the world and the lust of other things (Matt. 13:22; Mark 4:19; Luke 8:14) as the cause of the choking of truth out of life and making it unfruitful. Because of this it is difficult for a rich man to find his way into the kingdom. (Matt. 19:23-26; Mark 10:23-27; Luke 18:24-27.) It is not because of the possession of wealth but because of the trust imposed in it—the engrossing concern for it as the chief and all-sufficient good which cannot be relinquished even for the sake of the riches of the kingdom. (Matt. 19:16, 21, 22; Mark 10:17, 21, 22; Luke 18:18, 22, 23.) It is because of this that wealth constitutes such a danger and foe to the spiritual life.

Mamon of Unrighteousness

Mamon (usual spelling mammon) is said by Augustine to have been the name for money among the people of Carthage, though the form in which the word occurs in the Gospels indicates that it was current in the language of the Jews. It is found in the Targums, the Jewish paraphrases of the Old Testament, in the two phrases, "mamon of falsehood" and "mamon of wickedness." It is not improbable that the phrase "mamon of unrighteousness" was a familiar one to Jewish teaching though it is found in the New Testament but once. (Luke 16:9.) Comparison with the similar phrase in 16:8 ("steward of unrighteousness" translated "unrighteous steward") and in 18:6 ("judge of unrighteousness," translated "unjust judge")

indicates that we are to see in the phrase the essential equivalent of the expression " unrighteous mamon " in 16: 11. This must be understood to characterize the result which wealth tends to produce in the life of its possessor, or the one who covets it. The steward in this parable is an illustration of the kind of conduct which would give rise to and warrant for the characterization. A further example is the rich man at whose gate the beggar Lazarus lay, and whose indifference to the suffering and need of the poor sick man is a point of emphasis in the story. (Luke 16: 16, 19-31.) It is the exhibition of this same spirit in which property is valued above human life that is the background for one of Jesus' most striking parables about forgiveness. (Matt. 18: 23-35; especially ver. 25.) This almost inevitable result explains the woe pronounced upon the rich. (Luke 6: 24.) Jesus would hardly seem to include all under this woe, for among his friends and followers were some who were apparently of the class of at least the well-to-do. Such were James and John (Mark 1: 20; cf. Luke 5: 10), Lazarus and his sisters, Mary and Martha (Matt. 26: 6, 7; Mark 14: 3-5; John 12: 1-3), Zaccheus (Luke 19: 2), Joseph of Arimathea (Matt. 27: 57), Nicodemus (John 19: 39), and some of the women who were associated with Jesus in the work for a considerable period. (Luke 8: 1-3; Matt. 27: 55, 56; Mark 15: 40, 41; Luke 23: 49.) Wealth itself is not unrighteous, for it is a thing. But it has the almost inevitable effect of producing an unrighteous spirit in the one possessing it. It is not impossible, but it is very difficult for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God, for wealth sets itself before him as the supreme value, and he cannot make decision against it. It sets itself in opposition to God, and

one "cannot serve God and Mamon" (Matt. 6:24; Luke 16:13). Choice must be made between them.

Owners or Trustees

"Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?" said the householder to certain unsatisfied workmen in the parable (Matt. 20:15), and the question has often been repeated since both in fact and in spirit. The parable to which we are referring has seemed to some students of the Gospels to imply the acceptance by Jesus of a principle which the best Christian conscience has felt compelled to question. Space does not permit a discussion of this point, and it must suffice to say that the teaching of Jesus as a whole is against the basic idea upon which the question rests. For a man "does not own his wealth, he owes it." He is a steward, a trustee, and is under obligation to administer that of which he has possession on the principles of trusteeship. He may not do as he will with his own, for it is not his own, it is another's. This point of view is evident in a number of the parables, notably that of the unrighteous steward. (Luke 16:1-13.) The steward is evidently regarded as representative of his kind, and the conclusion from his action which we find in verses 8 and 9 has been the cause of much perplexity and discussion. If interpreted as Jesus intended there is no difficulty. The man was shrewd according to his standards of conduct. The main injunction to his disciples is that they be as prudent according to their professed standards as the steward was according to his. They should so use their wealth as to secure for themselves a place in the eternal tabernacles and a portion in the eternal riches. (Ver. 9.) Connected with this thought are the following fundamental

statements: Wealth is of a comparatively small value in relation to the true wealth of life and the kingdom; the wealth which one has in possession is not his own but belongs to another, and that one is God; one is under obligation to administer it as God's steward or trustee; if one is not faithful in the use of that which is entrusted to him, he must not expect God to give him a share in the eternal wealth. Fidelity to one's duty in the use of the wealth he holds determines his personal relation to the blessings of the kingdom. This is not the whole truth and not the only way in which Jesus sets forth the matter. But we should not shut our eyes to this very plain and explicit declaration. We are stewards of the material goods in our possession, and if we do not properly and faithfully discharge our stewardship, God has no place for us in his kingdom.

The Gospel of Wealth

In his book *The Gospel of Wealth,* Mr. Andrew Carnegie put the matter of responsibility for the use of wealth thus:

> The gospel of wealth is comprised in a few words. Surplus wealth is a sacred trust which its possessor is bound to administer in his lifetime for the good of the community from which it is derived. It teaches that the man who dies possessed of millions of available wealth which was free and his to administer during his lifetime dies disgraced. It recognizes, of course, that men must keep their capital in business as long as they labor, for capital is the tool by which they work wonders, but beyond the capital necessarily employed the aim of millionaires should be to die poor. The use of surplus wealth for objects which commend themselves to the administrator as the best calculated to promote the genuine improvement of his fellows is believed to be the best possible solution of the question of wealth and poverty.

Analysis of this statement shows that it includes three main ideas: the proper distribution, of surplus wealth, of the very rich. The statement is admirable, and the practise of the one who wrote it, as far as it goes, but the gospel of wealth as preached by Jesus goes very much beyond it. First of all it is a matter that concerns not only the very rich but every one. The parables of the talents (Matt. 25:14-30) and of the pounds (Luke 19:11-28) include not only those who had the ten but also those who had the one talent or pound. We are all stewards of our material possession and responsible for proper disposition of it, no matter how small the amount. Nor, in the second place, is it a question merely of the surplus. All the parables indicate that we are held responsible for all we control, even that which we spend and must spend on ourselves. We have no right to use any of it in a way that would not meet God's approval. In the third place, it is not a matter only of the proper use of wealth. Acquisition as well as distribution is subject to the conditions of stewardship. God holds me responsible for how I get it as well as how I use it.

The Good Steward

"It is required in stewards that a man be found faithful" (1 Cor. 4:2). The question of how one is to discharge his stewardship in detail Jesus does not discuss. He says that the poor are with us always (Matt. 26:11; Mark 14:7), and assumes that almsgiving will not only be always in order but will be constantly practised. (Matt. 6:2-4; Luke 6:38; 12:33; Matt. 19:21; Mark 10:21; Luke 18:22; 19:8.) The giving is measured not by the amount of the gift but by the spirit of the giver, for "the

gift without the giver is bare." We are to give as alms (our usual text) those things that are within. (Luke 11: 42.) This is well illustrated in the experience of Tolstoy who was one day asked for an alms. As he found his pockets empty he replied, "My brother, I have nothing to give." The man answered, "You have given me much, for you called me brother." Gifts are not to be made in expectation of something in return (Matt. 5:42; Luke 14:12), but it is a law of life that giving brings its returns and compensations. (Mark 4:24; Luke 6:38.) It is to be done generously (Matt. 10:8), and quietly (Matt. 6: 1-4), and should be governed by the need. (Matt. 5:43-48; Luke 10:30-36.) The spontaneous and lavish gift of love bestowed upon Jesus (Matt. 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9; John 12:1-8) was severely criticised by some present, and it was said that it might have been sold for more than three hundred days' wages (Matt. 26:9; Mark 14:5; John 12:5; cf. Matt. 20:2, 13) and given to the poor. Jesus defends the gift as the spontaneous outpouring of love, while he recognizes the obligation to have the needy constantly in mind. He condemns severely those who devour widows' houses (Luke 20:47), and announced as one of the outstanding facts of his ministry that the poor have the gospel preached to them. (Matt. 11:5; Luke 4:18; 7:22.) Thus we see again that Jesus made no attempt to give any formal rules or details of duty in the use of money. He announced certain great and fundamental principles which he made very clear. Any one who really wants to do so can understand his mind in the matter. The difficulty lies not so much in understanding the principles as in the unwillingness to make actual application of them in our lives.

Stewardship and Life

Not only is our whole life and all its resources a trust, but it is to be used for the enrichment of life. Professor Ellwood has stated the point in mind very succinctly [1] in these words, "Service of humanity must be the end of economic life," and again,[2] "The equalizing of opportunity is of the very essence of a democratic Christian organization of the economic life." It is said that nine-tenths of the wealth of the United States is owned and controlled by one-tenth of the population; that the average worker gets only about 32½% of the actual product of his labor, while the other part, 67½%, goes to the non-producer who controls and manipulates the situation.[3] Such conditions as these knowingly and actively continued will prove disastrous. The character of men shrivels and blackens quite as readily in the flame of prosperity as in the fires of adversity. Babson estimates [4] that the income of the church people of the United States is forty billions of dollars annually. One-tenth of this would be four billions. They give less than one per cent. of their annual income to religious and charitable purposes. Mohammed required that his followers give at least 2½% of their income in this way, and we consider ourselves much above them. The Pharisees who were lovers of money scoffed at the teaching of Jesus (Luke 16:14), and such is the attitude of many today even among those who call themselves his disciples. It is our business not only to provide through charitable and philanthropic agencies and activities for

[1] *Reconstruction of Religion*, p. 227.
[2] Ibid, p. 233.
[3] Professor Vedder.
[4] *Religion and Business*, 1920, p. 195.

the poor and the needy, but also to permeate the whole business realm with the ideals and spirit of Jesus. It is frequently said that no man can engage in business today and be a Christian. The statement may be doubted; the effort is too rarely made. If the statement is true then our whole industrial system is sufficiently condemned.

Questions and Problems for Further Discussion

1. Jesus lived in a very simple society, and we live in a very complex one. How can he be our guide in the solution of our problems?

2. What is Jesus' teaching concerning the value of money?

3. What did Jesus mean by "the deceit of riches"? "The mamon of unrighteousness"?

4. What are the most difficult problems we have in relation to wealth?

5. Justify the statement that we are stewards, not owners, of whatever wealth we have in possession. State clearly what it means in actual practical application of the principle.

6. What are the effects in individual and social life of the proper recognition of the principle of stewardship?

X

THE PRACTISE OF CHRISTIAN LIVING—WORLD BROTHERHOOD

Palestine the Cosmopolitan

" Galilee of the nations (gentiles)" is the phrase, quoted from the prophet (Isa. 9:1), with which the evangelist (Matt. 4:15), very fittingly characterizes the land in which Jesus spent his life. Palestine was the bridge between the great nations of the Mesopotamian and Nile valleys, and " Galilee was in the very center of world travel and on the road to everywhere." [1] Across it marched the armies of the Pharaohs on their way to battle in the East, and the generals of the great Eastern empires, with their hosts, made camp within its borders. Through the center of the country moved the caravan of merchantmen that bought Joseph and carried him down to Egypt, and five or six principal roads led from Capernaum, the home of Jesus (Matt. 4:13), out through Galilee and on to the nations beyond. " Sailors, soldiers, merchants, travelers, messengers, officers, princes, men of many classes and from many parts of the world passed through this place on business or pleasure." [2] Rome had many customs centers on the sea and elsewhere (Matt. 9:9; Mark 2:13, 14; Luke 5:29; 15:1), and a large number of independent Gentile cities was scattered throughout the country. The statement of Acts (2:5; cf. 4:25), need not be pressed to

[1] Edith Picton Turberville, *Christ and International Life.*

[2] Merrill, Article Galilee, Sea of, Hastings Dictionary of the Bible.

literal exactness, but the list of countries given (2:9-11) is significant and may very well be an incomplete list. Palestine was in the center of the world's trade and travel, and her life was by force of conditions complex and cosmopolitan.

Jewish Provincialism

Despite these varied contacts the people were very rigid and provincial in spirit. The Roman Government had recognized them as a peculiar and exceptional group, and had granted their religion a special status in the empire. The Jews regarded themselves as a distinctively favored people, and undertook to seclude themselves and associate with others upon a strictly limited basis. They had no dealings with the Samaritans at all (John 4:9; cf. Luke 9:52-56), although Samaria was the central territory of the country. Their laws and customs forbade free association with other people. (Acts 10:28; 11:3; Gal. 2:12.) They believed themselves to be the heirs of divine promises in which others had no share (Acts 9:15; 22:21; Rom. 16:26; Eph. 3:6; 1 Thess. 2:16), and looked with something like contempt upon all not of their own race and religion. (Matt. 15:26, 27; Mark 7:27, 28; Matt. 18:17.) Even after the earliest disciples of Jesus had allied themselves with the new faith they held on to most of the old prejudices which they had previously cherished. It required a special vision before Peter, the most prominent of the early leaders, would accept the thought that non-Jews were included in the program of the new faith, and even then he was not strong enough to hold steadily by the new position. (Acts 10:9-35; 11:18, 19; Gal. 2:12.) The career of persecution upon which

the young man, Saul, embarked (Acts 8:1-3) indicates the intensity of his conviction and his opposition to the new way. It is suggested in several passages in his writings (Rom. 16:25, 26; Col. 4:3; Eph. 3:5, 6) that Paul regarded the inclusion of the Gentiles in the gospel as a special and recent revelation, not formerly known or understood. The Gentiles were supposed to have small place in the plan of God and to deserve little consideration from his people.

Jesus' Personal Attitude

Notwithstanding certain ancient tradition, there is no authentic evidence that Jesus was ever outside of Palestine and its immediate environs. Indeed, we have his reported statement that he was not sent to any except the house of Israel. (Matt. 15:24.) And we are further told that when he sent out his disciples to prepare for his coming he instructed them to go neither to the Gentiles nor to the Samaritans, but only to the people of Israel. (Matt. 10:5, 6, 23.) Jesus makes a sharp contrast between the spirit of the Gentiles and that which should prevail among his followers, implying that his estimate of the Gentiles is not wholly to their credit. (Matt. 6:7, 32; 20:25; Mark 10:42; Luke 22:25; cf. Matt. 18:17.) He evidently felt that he had good reason to expect more from the Jews than from others (Matt. 8:10; Luke 7:9; John 4:22), but this did not imply disregard either of their shortcomings or of the virtues of others. The faith of the centurion was contrasted with that which he found among his own people to the implied discredit of the latter. His statements in the synagogue in his own home town, Nazareth (Luke 4:24-27), were so plainly a criticism

of his fellow townsmen that they were greatly angered and sought to destroy him. One of the best known of his parables, The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), points its lesson by exhibiting the noble qualities of a "despised Samaritan" (John 8:48) in contrast with the despicable conduct of two religious leaders of his own race. The cities wherein many of his greatest works were done were severely condemned as less worthy than the heathen cities, Tyre and Sidon, and Sodom, the synonym of wickedness. (Matt. 11:20-24; Luke 10:12-15.) Jesus' most stinging criticism and his most withering rebuke are passed, not upon some alien or outcast, but upon the most punctilious and influential group of religious leaders of his day. (Matt. 23:13-33; Luke 11:37-52.) Jesus knew man and what was in him (John 2:24, 25), and his judgment was based not upon appearance but upon the real quality of the inner spirit. It was righteous and true (John 5:30; 7:24; 8:16), impartial and accurate, terrible in its penetration, and unerring in its precision.

The Inclusive Vision

Although Jesus confined his personal ministry to his own people, the Gospels give ample evidence that he expected his kingdom to overcome national boundaries and be all-comprehensive and all-inclusive. In connection with his words of appreciation of the faith of the centurion he declares that many shall come from the east and the west, and shall have their place in the kingdom, while the members of his own race shall fail of entrance. (Matt. 8:11, 12; Luke 13:28, 29.) He had other sheep not of that fold, and with their coming there would be but the one flock together. (John 10:16.) The parable of

The Husbandmen (Matt. 21:33-46; Mark 12:1-12; Luke 20:9-19) was spoken against the Jewish national leaders, as they well perceived, and it contains the plain declaration that the kingdom would be taken from Israel and given to a nation that should prove itself sincere and worthy. The parable of the Two Sons (Matt. 21:28-32), that of the Marriage Feast (Matt. 22:1-14), and that of the great supper (Luke 14:15-24), were all of like import, and were so understood by those who heard them. Jesus makes announcement of a fundamental principle of life (Matt. 12:50; Mark 3:35; Luke 8:21) which cuts underneath all artificial distinctions and natural relationships, and by its very nature excludes from consideration everything not of the innermost spirit.

He Made Both One

As we have already shown, the disciples were very slow to understand the real meaning and bearing of Jesus and his message. But they did come to see it and were led to an interpretation which was true to the rich meaning of the truth he announced. When the new vision came to Peter, he perceived that in every nation under heaven he who fears God and does righteousness, is acceptable to him regardless of any and all other considerations. (Acts 10:34, 35; cf. 10:45; 11:18.) Paul felt himself called in a very special way as the apostle to the nations (Rom. 1:5; 15:16; Gal. 1:15, 16; 2:7, 8; Eph. 3:6-8), and gave especially clear and impressive interpretation of the universal significance of Jesus and his relation to the destiny of the whole of humanity. God has not only made the Gentiles that formerly knew not God fellow heirs, with Israel, in his kingdom, but he has broken down

the wall between the two and made of the two one new man. (Eph. 2:11-22.) The wall which separated them was not one of essential nature, for God had made of one (stock or blood) all the nations that dwell upon the face of the earth. (Acts 17:26.) It was a wall that existed in their minds, in prejudices and misunderstandings and antagonisms. As the Jew of that day felt, the difference was about that which is felt today between Christendom and heathendom. Paul saw that the message of Jesus and the message about Jesus is so deep and so vital that the assumed superiority of ancient Jewdom—and modern Christendom—was unwarranted. The haughty spirit and self-complacency of the ancient—and the modern—could find no basis in the mind of Jesus. It was God's purpose to sum up all things in him (Eph. 1:9-14; 2:6-10, 11-22; 3:1-8; 4:13-16), and through him to reconcile all unto himself. (Col. 1:15-23.) In him all racial distinctions disappear. There is neither Jew nor Greek, nor barbarian, nor Scythian, nor slave, nor freeman, nor male, nor female, but Christ is all and in all, and all are one in him. (Rom. 1:14; Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:11.) In Christ all distinctions of every kind whatsoever except those of the spirit of life are eliminated. He is our Master, and all we are brethren. (Matt. 23:8, 10.) He is the head, we are the body. In the body dwells his spirit, and the members of his body are interdependent and harmonious. That member which manifests a spirit of pride and exclusiveness is wholly unworthy of his calling and wholly untrue to his Master. Jesus and his message are given to us that we may have, not something to talk about, but something to live by. It is not to our credit that we are so slow to accept him and his way.

The Present Challenge

Basil Mathews, in his book *The Clash of Color,* has expressed in a clear and forceful sentence a thought which is in the minds of many today. He writes:

> The race question is the largest problem in the world. It can be solved in the Christian church and it alone. The future lies with this world community created by the spirit of Christ.

The truth of these words, and the truth is in them, lays a heavy task upon all who call themselves Christian. We should not shut our eyes to the fact that the problem is a difficult and perplexing one. Many factors enter into it. The solution cannot come through an overflow of mere sentiment. It will require trained intelligence and the fullest possible information to analyze the problem and point the way to a solution. But merely intelligence and scientific knowledge will never adjust the situation. We must have also the spirit of Jesus in the hearts and lives of the men and the women who are face to face with the problem. If we will think and feel and act with Paul, if the mind is in us which was in Christ Jesus, we will become truly cosmopolitan and international in mind and spirit, the middle walls of partition will be removed, and he " who made of both one new man " will be " our peace." " Chink " and " dago " and " nigger " and all other such terms of contempt will no longer be in our vocabulary, or in our hearts. We will no more ask as our first question, " What is the color of his skin? " or the " slant of his eyes," but what is the quality of his spirit, the character of his soul, the worth of his ideal. Our problem is not that of ancient Jew and Gentile but of modern American,

and Slav, Italian, and Armenian, of Chinese and Japanese, Mexican and Negro, and all the others in this "melting-pot of the nations." Dare we follow Jesus? If not, we will continue to abide in a world of bitterness and discord and darkness, approaching with it the unchristianizing and paganizing of us all. If we dare go with him, the new day and the new order and the new brotherhood will appear.

Safe for Democracy

"To make the world safe for democracy" was one of the fine phrases, expressive of a noble ideal, which caught the imagination of the American people and became the slogan that led us as crusaders into the World War. The principle of self-determination for the smaller nations as for the larger nations was one of the fourteen points upon the basis of which the armistice was proposed, and delegates later assembled for the peace conference at Versailles. The developments since those days have been a sorry disappointment to many high-minded lovers of humanity. Some wag has remarked that the war was evidently to make the world safe for hypocrisy, and another has insisted that we have seen in full effect the principle of selfish determination. The pathos in these remarks is deeper than the jest, and we acknowledge with pain that truth is in them too. But it ill becomes us of these United States to have a spirit of self-complacency or of undue harshness in our criticism of other peoples. We too have sinned. The finer idealism that possessed and inspired us during the days of the war seems somehow to have dimmed. The spirit which was not wholly absent then seems to have grown rife since, and we have been treated

to a sorry exhibition of partisan and petty politics, of individual selfishness in high places, of national indifference to vested wrong and the sore hurt of humanity that is our enduring shame. But there are those among us who cherish the ideals of democracy, and who hope and labor for the presence and influence of the mind of Christ in the councils of the nations.

The Mind of Christ

What that mind of Christ is has to be determined largely by inference, for Jesus had little to say upon matters of a direct political bearing. This was not because he had no concern for all high human interests, but because he gave himself to that which was more central and basic. What he does say is fundamental and far-reaching. Near the end of his life certain Pharisees sought to embarrass him by asking about the payment of tribute to Cæsar—a matter of dispute among the Jews. (Matt. 22: 15-22; Mark 12: 13-17; Luke 20: 20-26.) Jesus seems to give them an evasive answer. It is skilfully phrased so as to furnish no basis upon which his enemies can frame a charge against him. But his reply implies the valid character of the imperial authority and the duty to give it the recognition which is its due. Paul's discussion (Rom. 13: 1-7) of the power vested in the state is in line with the thought of Jesus and carries it further in its implications. According to Paul government is a part of the divine order of society and is entitled to the recognition and support of all good men. Jesus does not say as much as that, but he had an opportunity to place himself on the side of the Pharisees and refuse to acknowledge the claims of the emperor at all. This he did not do, but in so far as he speaks to the

question presented him recognizes the rightful claims of the ruler. The answer which Jesus gives to the request of James and John (Matt. 20:20-28; Mark 10:35-45; cf. Luke 22:24-27) for the first places in his kingdom is the most illuminating of all his utterances upon this subject. He makes a sharp distinction between the spirit that prevails among the Gentiles, that is, among the nations at large, and the spirit that should prevail among his disciples and in his kingdom. The kings of the nations, and all who have authority, exercise that authority in such a way as to make those over whom they rule feel the weight of the authority they assume. But among his followers those who would have authority and leadership must regard themselves as servants. Their claim to preeminence rests upon their spirit of service, and the greatest leader must be the greatest servant. According to this teaching government exists not for the sake of the governing but the governed. Those who bear rule among the nations have the opposite conception. But they are for that reason wanting in a true understanding of the nature and function of government.

Christianity and Democracy

Here as always Jesus is concerned with spirit rather than form, and he is raising no question as to any particular form of political organization. He is speaking of the spirit of government, and he insists that it shall be controlled by the ideals of democracy and the purpose to serve. He who thinks and acts in the spirit of overlordship has the spirit of a pagan, no matter in what nation of the world he may live, or to what race he may belong. Democracy and the ideals of Jesus are tied up

together. The rising tide of democracy in all the East, both Near and Far, is a testimony of these native peoples to a new sense and conviction of the worth of the individual which has come to them with the preaching of the Christian gospel. That is the fruit of Christianity wherever it is preached. The implications of the message of Jesus carry into the realm of the relation of the stronger nations to the weaker and to each other. To lay claim to all the high privileges of the commerce and the markets of the world, and at the same time to refuse any share in the responsibility of stabilizing the life and solving the problems of the world, is to confess ourselves bankrupt in moral intelligence and leadership, and to deserve every hard and stinging epithet that is applied to us. To insist that we must be heard before the nations reach any decision in the perplexing problems through which they are seeking to find their way, and at the same time to refuse to sit with them in any capacity in the discussion is to display a spirit that is contemptible. There are those who aspire to leadership in our national counsels and a controlling influence in our decisions, who are as hopelessly provincial as the narrowest of the ancient Jews and as incapable of high moral leadership as the house of the Herods. Our claim to preeminence must rest upon our assumption of moral leadership and world service. The wisest way in which this relation can be established is a question for experts in political science and morals, but the obligation upon us to assume it is a plain inference from the words of Jesus. Those who would lead us in a different direction are not true friends either of our nation or of humanity. It should be made perfectly clear to them that we will not follow such leadership.

Democracy and World Brotherhood

Joseph Cook, one of the influential religious leaders of the last century, is reported to have said at one time that "the nineteenth century made the world a neighborhood, it remains for the twentieth century to make it a brotherhood." It is, and has been, the hope of many that the ideal expressed in these words may be largely realized, and they have given themselves to that end to the full measure of their strength and resources. Standing squarely in front of every effort of this kind is that expression of "exaggerated nationalism and imperialism," war, "the most colossal and ruinous social sin that afflicts mankind." Jesus lived in a time and among people in a perfect ferment of nationalism and imperialism, in a nation that was rushing by way of revolution and revolt to its ruin. Many among them eagerly awaited and welcomed any one who promised them national deliverance and freedom. At times Jesus was believed to be about to undertake the task, but if we know anything about him at all it is certain that he did not give the idea any encouragement. He recognized the prevalence of war—how could he avoid it—and evidently expected it to continue (Luke 14:31; Matt. 24:6, 7; Mark 13:7; Luke 21:9, 10; cf. Luke 21:20, 24), but that does not mean his approval of it. His statement (Matt. 10:34), that he came not to send peace but a sword, must be interpreted in the light of its connection (especially 10:35-38) and its parallel in Luke. (Luke 12:51-53; note the word "division" in verse 53.) When so interpreted it is seen to have nothing to do with the thought of war but of the separating power of himself and his truth. (Cf. also Heb. 4:12.) The passage in Luke (22:36-38), about the buy-

ing of a sword is peculiar and difficult. But the declaration in verse 38 that two swords are enough ("a great plenty") would be ridiculous as a reflection of the war spirit, and the episode at the time of his arrest which connects with this statement (Matt. 26:51-53; Mark 14:47; Luke 22:49-51; John 18:10, 11), furnishes positive evidence that Jesus' intention had nothing to do with the use of the sword. The whip of cords used at the time of the cleansing of the temple was for the animals only (John 2:14, 15), the men being driven out by his cutting reproof. (John 2:16; Matt. 21:13; Mark 11:17; Luke 19:46.) His words as he wept over the city of Jerusalem (Luke 19:41-44) indicate that he clearly foresaw its destruction by the violence of war. He saw the headlong rush of the nation toward war and its own downfall, and he would have recalled it from both before it was too late. If only it had known the things of peace, and the opportunities that awaited it in his program of righteousness its disaster might have been averted. His statement (Matt. 26:52) that they that take the sword shall perish by the sword is commentary upon this national situation as well as upon his own personal attitude at the time of his arrest. Jesus expressly taught that it is the peace-makers, and those who love their enemies, doing good to all who despitefully use them, who are sons of God. (Matt. 5:44, 45; Luke 6:27, 28, 35.) His doctrine of non-resistance (Matt. 5:38-42; Luke 6:27-30) has been emphasized by Count Tolstoy as the very essence of the gospel. A proper consideration of all the message of Jesus makes us sure that this is an unwarranted emphasis. The sharp contrast between the traditional principle of retaliation and revenge and that announced by Jesus, points the truth of his words. The

law of living is love, and this is one expression of it. We are to suffer injury rather than do it. We should accept wrong rather than undertake to get even with another for wrong-doing. Force and violence have no place in the mind of Jesus. With his birth came the announcement of peace and good-will among men (Luke 2:14), and this was his spirit at all times and in all things. The Jewish people of his time feverishly awaited their king and deliverer who would place himself at the head of the nation and lead it in its struggle for independence. There were many who expected Jesus to assume the rôle. (Matt. 21:8, 9; Mark 11:8-10; Luke 19:37, 38; John 12:12, 13.) At one time the people attempted to force him into this kingship, but he withdrew from them and repudiated the idea. (John 6:14, 15.) His was a kingdom not of this world (John 18:36, 37) and he refused to give himself in any way to the plans of the political enthusiasts of his time. They sought political conquest and supremacy, he sought the peace of righteousness. He had to make choice. He made it. The effort of some misguided theorists and apologists for militarism to align Jesus with them in their contention is as pathetic as it may be sincere. Harry Emerson Fosdick has said,

> War is utterly and irremediably unchristian; in its total method and effort it means everything that Jesus did not mean, and it means nothing that he did mean; it is a more blatant denial of every Christian doctrine than all the theoretical atheists on earth ever could devise.

One may hesitate to accept this statement in toto, but there can be no doubt that the dominance of the spirit of Jesus in the affairs of the nations would eradicate war and the

spirit that makes for war utterly and irrevocably. Where he reigns righteousness and peace and brotherhood prevail.

Questions and Problems for Further Discussion

1. In view of the cosmopolitan character of the population of Palestine, explain the provincial spirit that prevailed among the Jews.

2. Explain why it was that Jesus confined his personal ministry to his own people in Palestine.

3. What are the chief interracial problems that we face today? What effect would the application of the principles of Jesus have upon the specific conduct of Christians in these relationships? Would you exempt any of these relations from the teaching of Jesus, e. g., marriage?

4. Should all class distinctions disappear? If not, what ones should remain? Which of the forms of government in the world today do you think Jesus would be most likely to approve? Why?

5. What should be the attitude of the United States toward the other nations of the world? What are the main features of our duty as a world power?

6. Are the teachings of Jesus impracticable in the world of today? Would Jesus approve any kind of war? If so, what kind? Give an illustration.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

For the benefit of those who may desire to read further on the topics discussed in this booklet a brief bibliography is given. The books suggested are chosen in part because they represent varying points of view, and in part because they are those that are most likely to be available to the students in this course. They are all stimulating and worthy discussions.

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